

## PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF 2 x 3-4 BEDROOM- RESIDENTIAL HOMES ON Land at HIDEAWAY COTTAGE, WHITFIELD, GL12 8DR

Design statement

Supporting letter to application

This document is in support of the above application and explores the reasons why we believe that this application should obtain the support of the planners and gain approval.

The application is an outline planning application with reserved matters on design and landscaping. There are outline plans and positioning of the properties included in the application along with the relevant documents. The application is to develop two 3/4 bed roomed houses on part of the garden of Hideaway Cottage, Whitfield. The houses will be well designed and built using sustainable materials and will be aimed at being as close as possible to Zero carbon.

### HISTORY OF THE PROPOSED SITE

Hideaway Cottage has been subject to many changes over its history, originally being stable blocks and worker cottages for The Dower House of the Tortworth estate and then residential accommodation in the form of 2 cottages. Following the change of The Dower House being developed into the Park Hotel, the cottages were sold separately to the owners and then subsequently again sold separately, when the hotel was purchased by a new owner.

Since that time, the cottage has been manager and staff accommodation and more recently re-constructed as overflow bedrooms for the Hotel, though they were never used for this purpose.

The cottage and its land were separated from The Hotel in 2017 and was then subject to a change of use planning application to turn the cottage from Hotel use back into a single Residential class 3 dwelling. This application was successful as was a subsequent application to extend and carry out renovations to the derelict cottage to bring it back into suitable living accommodation. This work is still in progress.

The cottage is situated in fairly large grounds and garden adding up to nearly 2 acres.

The Park Hotel eventually folded as a going concern and was the subject of Pre-application enquiries to return it to residential use, details included in this application. It has now since been purchased and has been converted from Class 1 Hotel use into Class 2 Mental health residential care accommodation.

### RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

In the sites history there have been several planning applications submitted to the Authority.

1977 N2501/1

Application to turn the existing stables/store into managers accommodation  
Permission granted

1986 P86/1858

Application to turn the cottage into an annexe for extra hotel accommodation for 4 bedrooms. Permission granted

1989 P89/2275

The Park Hotel received a successful planning permission to convert the hotel into 5 apartments with associated garages. The permission was never activated.

P92 /1366

Application to erect an extension to The Park Hotel to provide an additional 35 bedrooms.  
Permission refused.

23<sup>rd</sup> May 2014 PT14/0711/F

Application to construct a detached building to form 3 double bedrooomed disabled access rooms. A further detached building to form a gym, therapy and beauty rooms with associated office.

For the erection of 6 no 2x bedroom holiday chalets, kennels and erection of a conservatory to the rear of the hotel.

Permission was granted

The gym, therapy and beauty rooms and office would have been situated on the land now part of Hideaway Cottage. The kennels were erected but none of the other permissions were ever activated.

PT15/5302/0. 20<sup>th</sup> Feb 2016

Following the success of the previous application the hotel then made an application to construct 9 houses on part of the curtilage of the hotel land and curtilage of the now Hideaway Cottage land. This would involve demolishing the kennels and instead of building the 2x bedroom chalet holiday homes. This application was refused permission as it would clearly be a major extra development within an operating hotel and lacked enough detail.

16<sup>th</sup> Nov 2017 PT/17/4960/F

For a change of use to change Hideaway Cottage from Class C1 Hotel use into residential Class C3

Approved

20<sup>th</sup> March 2018 PT18/1190/F

To erect a two-storey extension to Hideaway Cottage and conversion of store into living accommodation with alterations to access and parking.

Approved

PRE 18/0623

Pre application for the demolition of The Park Hotel and to build 5 dwellings in its footprint plus an additional 8 detached dwellings on the former gardens of The Park Hotel and land owned by Hideaway Cottage.

The findings for this Pre-App were that it was deemed that the proposed development was considered as too excessive for the rural location and that the design of the proposed dwellings would be paramount to accord with this rural setting. It did recommend that if the number of dwellings in the application were reduced it would make it easier to support.

#### DETAIL OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT FOR THIS APPLICATION

This current application has taken into consideration the previous history and comments from planners and is to provide a small and sustainable development within large grounds of the existing cottage bringing a reasonable rural development of new homes alongside existing residential accommodation. This is an outline application with reserved matters to allow for further discussions regarding the design and landscaping related to the development, which will be designed with self-builders in mind. If self-builders are given the opportunity to develop the plots, the design and footprints will be restricted to control the intended near zero carbon plans.

Even though this is an outline application it is intended that the properties would be built as a sustainable development using eco building materials and a design suitable to fit comfortably alongside the existing properties, including Hideaway Cottage, The Dower House, Whitfield Gate Farm and Victoria Cottage, so using natural local materials, stone, render and cladding in traditional style mixed with contemporary features and recycling as many materials as possible. Their size and quality will enhance and support those local existing homes and buildings, without impacting upon the local amenity and views. The properties would be served by sewage treatment plants and heating would be by air or ground source heat pumps and using solar panels to generate energy for the properties. The properties will be using high specification insulation to reduce energy costs.

Access to the two properties would be via the existing private, Whitfield Farm Lane and the private drive that, leads to Hideaway Cottage. The properties would be placed in the top North-West Corner of the land owned by Hideaway Cottage, where there will be little or no impact upon existing properties. More details will be shown in The Design and plans. This pocket of land is unused and excess to requirements for Hideaway Cottage, making it very suitable to be used for this development.

We believe that this is a limited and reasonable development suitable for its secluded rural location in the open countryside and is in fact a sustainable development and a suitable use for this pocket of land. It will not have an adverse impact on the highway access, especially as the local traffic has been reduced following the closure of the Park Hotel and change of use to the controlled residential community use of The Dower House by Maples Community, a fact confirmed by the traffic officer during the recent change of use application for that property. A copy of that report is attached. The new properties will be

adequately served by local transport and are within reasonable walking and travel distances of Falfield and Thornbury.

Local services include the North Bound and South bound bus stops, which are within a few hundred yards of Whitfield Farm Lane. These bus services include Thornbury, Dursley, Berkeley, Almondsbury and The Mall Cribbs Causeway. There is also a service that links into Bristol City Centre. The nearest bus stop on the A38 is also the secondary pick up point for Castle School. The nearest primary schools are Tortworth VC, Stone and Woodford Primary on the A38 plus Crossways School in Thornbury all within the local area. Even Alveston and Olveston, are within a reasonable travelling distance.

The bus service to Thornbury has bus stops by two GP's surgeries, Pharmacies, Tesco and Aldi supermarkets, Thornbury Leisure Centre and all the other services and shopping opportunities in Thornbury St Mary's Centre and the High Street.

There are also plenty of Employment opportunities within short distances of the proposed development.

The next door property, The Dower House employs over 20 staff. Eastwood Park, training and conference centre plus wedding and event venue. Eastwood Garden Centre, both within 900 metres and HMP Eastwood Park is a major employer within 2000 metres. The Huntsman Inn and Gables hotel are also within 2500 metres.

A little further distance finds, HMP Leyhill, Tortworth Court Hotel, Dobbies Garden Centre, all these are well within cycling distance or by cross country local footpaths. Thornbury also contains a lot of major employers that are within cycling and walking distances and are on the local bus routes.

Falfield is the nearest village settlement and boasts, the Public house, convenience store, post office, Church and village hall and hotel, It also has several clubs such as Scouts, Brownies, WI etc.

The proposed development is also in a perfect position for its occupants to enjoy the local countryside with many footpaths and open countryside walking paths, starting right outside the properties, and taking in areas like Tortworth, Milbury Heath, Cromhall and Rockhampton, to name but a few.

A large residential development has been approved and is under construction in Falfield and this small, proposed development will provide an alternative style and choice of rural homes. The plots would be available as an option, to be purchased by self-builders.

We attach some detail from the transport statement provided with the Dower House change of use successful application and relative planning policies.

## PLANNING POLICIES

The relevant policies considered for this application are

PSP1 As the applicant has already shown in the designs associated with the renovation of Hideaway Cottage (PT18/1190/F), where the quality and distinction of the original 1870 cottage mixed with contemporary and high-quality design will result in quality sustainable dwellings suited to the open countryside and area.

This application will also be dealt with in the same manner and the design of the new properties will be to a suitable high-quality design to suit the locality and will use quality sustainable materials, where possible, to ensure low impact and sustainability and low energy costs.

PSP2 Landscaping of the proposal will be carried out to have as little impact on the area as possible and will include indigenous planting in hedgerows and trees and ensuring the maintenance of wildlife areas and habitat as well as using as much permeable products as is possible. Existing trees will be retained where possible or replaced by additional planting.

PSP8 Residential amenity. The residential amenity of both properties will be of high quality with comfortable grounds and excellent views across the Cotswold Hills. There will be no significant impact upon any existing dwellings and in most cases no impact at all. Hideaway Cottage will not be overlooked by either of the new dwellings and will experience very little impact other than the shared driveway access. There are adequate passing points in the driveway to avoid the need for vehicles to reverse onto Whitfield Farm Lane.

The residents would be able to enjoy all the local amenities as described in the above paragraphs.

PSP11 Transport impact.

The increases in traffic movements will be completely within acceptable levels and not create any major impact upon Whitfield Farm Lane, which is of course a private lane or the A38 junction. There has already been a reduction in vehicle movements from the closing down and change of use of the former Park Hotel into the new Dower House class 2 business. The addition of this application will not add any unacceptable levels of increased traffic flows or raise the levels of movements to anywhere near previous hotel levels.

The new properties will include for cycle stores and pedestrian access.

The private driveway from Whitfield Farm Lane will be shared between Hideaway Cottage and the two new properties. This driveway is between 4.5m – 8m wide at times and includes adequate passing and turning areas. The private Whitfield Farm lane also benefits from at least 3 passing areas between the proposed site and the A38 junction. Both Whitfield Farm Lane and Hideaway driveway are private and not adopted highways.

The A38 is served by a comprehensive bus service and the bus stops are within 750 metres of the proposed properties.

The proposal is deemed as in open countryside so it is right that the balance between the need or benefits for development should not outweigh the impact on the local area.

## THE NEED FOR DEVELOPMENT LAND FOR NEW DWELLINGS.

South Gloucestershire like many councils are finding it difficult to meet the housing land requirements for the area, there are large development sites that have been given approval or are becoming available, however, windfall land plays an important part in meeting the housing targets and this is one such site. What this proposal will also provide is much needed housing opportunity within the parish and potentially help meet the requirements of the self-build register.

The development will also provide work opportunities for local trades persons and business for local suppliers as preference will go to supporting local businesses wherever possible.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. We have identified the need for sustainable development opportunities to assist meeting the required land and housing targets.
2. We have shown the local amenities and services that the new dwellings will benefit from.
3. We have shown that there should be no issues on highways and transport as borne out by the recent successful planning application for change of use for the Dower House.
4. We have identified the need for self-build opportunities in the area.
5. Previous planning permissions and pre-planning applications have set a precedent in favour of development on the land at Hideaway Cottage.
6. The application shows the quality of the intended development and the sustainability of the project to meet planning policy requirements.
7. The landscaping will be carried out to support wildlife and the surrounding countryside.
8. We feel that the proposed development does not show any adverse impact on the open countryside but does have benefits that do outweigh any impact.

With all the above areas meeting planning policy requirements and the application not being in contention with policy we believe that the Authority should support this application.