

Planning Statement

Conversion of Barn to a Residential Dwelling with extension and associated Outbuilding for Bat Mitigation

In respect of:

Fulford, Withington Road, Andoversford, Cheltenham, GL54 4LL

By

McLoughlin Planning Ltd

Date of Document

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. This planning statement has been prepared by McLoughlin Planning Ltd on behalf of Mr. & Mrs. Evans. The proposed development which this planning statement supports is for the conversion of conversion of the barn to a residential dwelling with extension and associated outbuilding for bat mitigation (please see supporting plans for proposed incidental uses).
- 1.2. The proposed development has been subject to pre-application engagement with the Council in March 2023. Positive feedback was provided based on which this planning proposal has been evolved and progressed. Subsequent to the pre-application planning permission has been given to convert the barn to a 2 bedroomed residential dwelling under planning permission ref: 23/01038/FUL.
- 1.3. For the case officer's ease of reference, this planning statement has been structured as follows:
 - Site Context & Designations
 - Planning Proposal
 - Planning Policy
 - Planning Assessment
 - Conclusion
- 1.4. In addition to this supporting planning statement, the planning application is supported by the following documents:
 - Supporting Plans by Tyack Architects
 - Ecology Preliminary Report by Cotswold Wildlife
 - Structural Report by Davidson Walsh
 - Completed CIL form 1
 - Biodiversity Checklist
- 1.5. It will be demonstrated that the proposed development, as agreed in the pre-application advice provided, accords with Local Plan policies and that planning permission should be granted.



2.0 Site Context & Designations

Site Context

- 2.1. The proposal site is a historic stone barn and an associated modern open fronted “L” barn located adjacent to an existing dwelling known as ‘Fulford’. The collection of buildings (forming a small farmstead) is located south of Andoversford and Shipton Oliffe in an isolated rural location.
- 2.2. The stone barn is a single storey stone structure with a steel sheeted roof. In terms of its form, the development is a simple rectangular shaped building. It benefits from its own established access point and associated courtyard. The courtyard is enclosed by the stone barn and modern associated open-fronted barn forming an “L” shape. The modern barn is a timber framed structure with metal corrugated roofing.

Planning Designations

- 2.3. Based on the Council’s Local Plan Policies Map, the proposal site lies outside a defined settlement boundary (open countryside) and in the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). There are no further environmental or heritage designations.
- 2.4. According to the Environment Agency’s flood risk mapping database, the proposal site lies in Flood Zone 1 (low risk).
- 2.5. The site is accessed along an unrestricted byway KWG17A, (Withington Restricted Byway 17A).

Planning History

- 2.6. The existing barns have recently been given planning permission for the conversion of the barn to a residential dwelling and associated works, parking and proposed bat mitigation which was permitted on 14th November 2023. Planning permission has also been secured for the replacement dwelling of Fulford under planning permission ref: 23/02152/FUL.



3.0 Planning Proposal

- 3.1. The proposed development seeks to make use of the disused barns to provide a holistic residential development. The older fully enclosed stone barn is proposed to provide a new residential dwelling. Given the existing openings, very limited external change is required to convert the barn. The structural report provided also confirms that the building is capable of conversion.
- 3.2. Given the existing site layout with the neighbouring property known as "Fulford", the stone barn has no openings facing toward the neighbouring residential property. Rather all new windows and openings would be directed north or south (out over open agricultural fields) or east into the courtyard which will be associated with the new dwelling.
- 3.3. The existing stone wall adjoining the road to the south will be retained, as will the existing access point to provide vehicular access to the new home. A small new section of wall to the east of the existing wall is proposed to formally enclose a small section of the courtyard to visually distinguish the new residential curtilage from the surrounding land uses.
- 3.4. The modern open-fronted timber "L" shaped barn will also be retained in its current form. The internal spaces of the barn will be used to provide needed incidental residential uses to the host dwelling, such as: a garden/log store, car parking and a recreational space (in this instance a covered seating area). The internal courtyard would provide the new home with some outdoor amenity space, which is considered an appropriate level given the modest size of the proposed new home.
- 3.5. Please see the supporting proposal plans submitted which will provide a visual illustration of the proposed development described above.



4.0 Planning Policy

- 4.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires Planning Applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan currently comprises the Cotswold District Council (2018) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 4.2. The relevant Local Plan policies assessed for this proposal include:
- DS1 – Development Strategy
 - DS4 – Open market Housing Outside Principal and Non-Principal Settlement
 - EC6 – Conversion of Rural Buildings
 - EN1 – Built, Natural & Historic Environment
 - EN2 – Design of Built & Natural Environment
 - EN4 – The Wider Natural & Historic Landscape
 - EN5 – Cotswold AONB
 - INF4 – Highway Safety
 - INF5 – Parking Provision



5.0 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

- 5.1. The proposal site lies in the open countryside and therefore needs to be assessed against the requirements of Local Plan policy DS4. The policy states that for new open market housing outside Principal and Non-Principal Settlements will not be permitted unless the proposal accords with other policies that expressly deal with residential development in such locations.
- 5.2. In this instance, it will be demonstrated that the proposal accords with another policy for new residential development. When considering conversions of rural buildings Policy EC6 sets out what is required in order for permission to be granted. These requirements will be set out and addressed in turn in order to demonstrate that the principle of this proposal is policy compliant.
- 5.3. The first requirement is that the building is structurally sound, suitable and capable for conversion to the proposed use without substantial alteration, extension or rebuilding. Structural reports will be provided that demonstrate that the barn proposed for conversion is structurally sound and capable of conversion. The proposal does seek to replace the portal frame barn with a structure that is in keeping with the existing stone barn.
- 5.4. The second requirement is that the proposal would not cause conflict with the existing farming operations, including severance or disruption to the holding that would prejudice its continued viable operation.
- 5.5. The outbuildings that form this proposal are no longer required for the purposes of agriculture and are therefore surplus to requirements for farming operations. Further to this the siting of the proposal is away from any farming operations. As a result of this there will be fewer conflicts with vehicle movements and therefore not impact any agricultural processes of the area.
- 5.6. The final requirement is that the development proposals are compatible with extant uses on the site and existing planned uses in close proximity to the site. Adjacent to the site is an existing dwelling. Therefore, the proposal to site a dwelling next to this via conversion of outbuildings is considered compatible.
- 5.7. Paragraph 84 of the Framework supports development that reuses redundant or disused buildings and enhances the immediate setting. Given that the proposal is



reusing existing buildings, with associated landscaping, this can be seen as being in accordance with the framework.

- 5.8. The application buildings consist of a stone building and an L-shaped portal framed building. The latter building is largely open sided, albeit with some areas of hanging vertical timber cladding. With regard to the stone barn, as has been demonstrated with the previous planning permission, the existing stone barn is of a solid stone construction and is considered to be structurally sound. Moreover, permission has now been granted for the conversion of the stone building to a dwelling. The stone building is in excess of 37 sqm in size and is therefore a size that could be used as a dwelling in its own right without recourse to enlargement. This demonstrating the building is of a size that is capable of being used as a dwelling without recourse to extension, substantial alteration or re-building.
- 5.9. In contrast to the stone barn, the L-shaped building is considered not to be of sufficient substance to enable its conversion without substantial alteration and re-building tantamount to the erection of a new building. The proposed scheme seeks to incorporate an extension off the barn utilising part of the footprint of the L – shaped timber framed building lying to the east of the stone barn this would result in a new extension no larger than the existing building on the site. The aforementioned L-shaped timber framed building a fairly lightweight construction and after assessment is not considered to be capable of conversion in its own right. However, as the existing stone barn is capable of conversion to residential use in accordance with criterion a of Policy EC6, it is not necessary for the post war agricultural building to also be capable of conversion without extension, substantial alteration or re-building.
- 5.10. Policy EC6 does not preclude the addition of extensions to buildings proposed for conversion if the principal building is capable of conversion to the proposed use. In addition, the extension to the stone barn would be result in a net loss of overall footprint of the two barns combined. With this in mind the proposal is therefore considered to accord with Policy EC6.
- 5.11. In addition, the proposed residential use will be located in close proximity to the existing residential property, which already lie adjacent to the fields next to the application buildings. The residential use of the buildings is considered not to have an adverse impact on the ability of the users of the adjacent fields to continue to undertake agricultural activities on the land. The proposed use is also considered to be compatible with existing residential uses in close proximity to the site.



- 5.12. Overall, the proposal demonstrates that a replacement dwelling and converting the rural outbuildings to a dwelling. Therefore, it is considered it has been demonstrated that the principle of development is acceptable.

Design

- 5.13. Local Plan policy EN2 requires development which accords with the Cotswold Design Code, and which are designed to a high quality which respects the character and distinctive appearance of the locality. As set out under paragraph 126 of the Framework, good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.
- 5.14. The existing buildings have a relatively plain and functional appearance which is consistent with their established agricultural use. The buildings are not untypical of the type of development often seen within a working rural landscape. As a consequence, they are considered not to represent an incongruous form of development within the AONB landscape. Moreover, the existing field extends up to the edge of the buildings with the result that the buildings have a direct connection with the field and a strong functional relationship with the agricultural landscape.
- 5.15. The overall approach to the development has been a case of preservation and sympathetic additions. Starting with the stone barn, all existing openings will be re-used where practicable to provide door/window openings to new internal habitable rooms. Timber framing and oak cladding will be utilised to offer a soft material palette which is visually sympathetic to the existing Cotswold stone elevations and roof. The use of timber also helps visually tie to the stone barn with the timber finish of the adjoining extension.
- 5.16. The intention is a simple and modest finish to the barn and extension, which respects the simplicity of agricultural barns generally, thereby ensuring the architecture responds to the buildings historic use and wider surrounding context. The extension as part of the current scheme is considered to retain a simple and functional appearance. that respects the agricultural characteristics of the existing building.
- 5.17. When viewed from the Public Right of Way to the south-west, the application buildings are viewed against the setting of the existing dwelling on the site. The existing buildings do not therefore appear as an isolated form of development in the countryside.
- 5.18. Based on the information provided through the design approach adopted, pre-application advice and supporting plans submitted it is considered that the proposed



barn conversion will result in the high-quality design in accordance with Local Plan policies EN1 and EN2 and paragraph 126 of the Framework.

Impact on Local Character (AONB)

- 5.19. The site is located within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Local Plan Policy EN1 states that new development will, where appropriate, promote the protection, conservation, and enhancement of the historic and natural environment.
- 5.20. Policy EN4 states that development will be permitted where it does not have a significant detrimental impact on the natural and historic landscape of the Cotswolds. On the AONB more specifically, Policy EN5 states that in determining proposals within the AONB or its setting, the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape, character and special qualities will be given great weight.
- 5.21. an assessment has been undertaken of the landscape character type of the existing site. With reference to the Cotswold Landscape Character Assessment, the proposal site lies within the landscape character type: "Chapter 8 (High Wold Valley), Part 8D Upper Coln Valley" of the AONB. The applicant does not dispute the description provided in the pre-application advise on these landscape areas which has formed the basis of the applicant's assessment. In particular, it is considered that the following concluding paragraph from the Landscape Assessment is relevant:
- 'The landscape retains a strong rural character. The main settlements in the area are Withington, which straddles the Coln, and Compton Abdale, located at the head of one of its main tributary valleys. Beyond these settlements the landscape is sparsely settled with a small number of isolated farms located throughout the landscape. These are generally sited along lanes off the main arterial routes through the valley.'*
- 5.22. The proposed barn conversion and extension would not extend beyond the established built form or result in an encroachment into the wider open countryside. As described under the design section of this Planning Statement, the architectural approach has been one of simplicity and sympathetic use of materials which will retain the key form and visual appearance of the barns within the landscape context of the AONB. The intention is to retain the Farmstead architectural appearance which is considered a characteristic of this part of the AONB.



- 5.23. The proposal will also retain the existing established hardstanding to the northeast of the proposal site for use as parking and outdoor recreational space associated with the new dwelling.
- 5.24. Whilst the outbuilding proposed for the bat mitigation sits outside the existing defined courtyard area, the location was discussed with Cotswold wildlife surveys and advised this was the most appropriate siting for the bat loft. In addition the building sits adjacent
- 5.25. It remains a material consideration that the Council did not raise any objections to the previously permitted barn conversion on the AONB, subject to landscaping. Based on the information provided. Given the reduction in built form on the site, it is considered that this advice remains valid.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

- 5.26. The Local Plan Policy EN2 requires development to be of a quality that respects the character and distinctive appearance of the locality. Consideration needs to be given to the Cotswold Design Guide. For the purposes of this assessment, the Cotswold Design Guide, Key part E, requires developments to consider the amenities of adjacent properties to ensure new development are well integrated.
- 5.27. The proposed development has been designed to ensure no habitable windows or openings face directly into the amenity space of Fulford (the neighbouring residential property). With the proposed outdoor and parking area of the new barn also directed to the existing courtyard to the north and inside the envelope of the existing modern barn, it is considered that the impact on neighbouring amenity from noise will be minimal, as the existing stone barn provides a visual and noise buffer. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal will not result in an unacceptable harm which would prevent the residents at Fulford from enjoying their outdoor amenities.

Heritage

- 5.28. The existing barn is not a listed building, nor does the barn adjoin or fall within the setting of a listed building. Through engagement with the Council at pre-application stage, it is acknowledged that the Council considers the stone barn to Non-Designated Heritage Asset (hereby referred to as NDHA).
- 5.29. It is a material consideration that the proposed conversion was initially assessed by the Council's heritage officer during pre-application with no objections raised. It was



concluded under the previous planning permission that the conversion was considered acceptable in heritage terms. As the proposal has been updated to remove the more modern L-shaped building and replace this with a simple linear extension of a smaller size and scale of a similar design that respects the characteristics of the stone barn it is considered that this conclusion should remain unchanged.

- 5.30. Based on the assessment provided, it is considered that the proposed development will conserve the NDHA and accords with the requirements of policies EN1 & EN12.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 5.31. Local Plan policy EN7 requires development to conserve and enhance natural assets likely to be affected, including trees, hedgerows, and woodland of high landscape amenity, ecological or historical value as well as veteran trees. In addition, Local Plan policy EN8 requires development to conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, providing net gains where possible.
- 5.32. The application is supported with a bat survey from Cotswold Wildlife Surveys that assesses and sets out the required mitigation requirements for the proposed conversion works. In accordance with the report, the previous planning permission provided the required bat mitigation within the L- shaped building on site, this building is now proposed to be removed. In discussion with Cotswold Wildlife Surveys , the proposed mitigation measures have been redesigned and would now be provided in the form of a separate outbuilding to the specification required to provide the required bat loft mitigation set out in the bat survey report.
- 5.33. The application site is also located within the 15.4KM Zone of Influence of the Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Based on the pre-application advice provided, the Council will require the applicant to provide one of two options: (1) submit a mitigation proposal for the individual development; or (2) Await the strategic mitigation strategy for the SAC.
- 5.34. A Beechwood SAC mitigation strategy is now available, with new residential development required to provide a financial contribution towards the Local Authorities and Natural England's mitigation strategy. This will be secured via an S.111 Agreement with a contribution of £673 + £125 Administration fee. For the purposes of this proposal, the applicant accepts to provide the financial contribution with a draft S.111 form provided based on the template available on the Council's website.



Access and Highway Safety

- 5.35. Local Plan policy INF4 states that development will be permitted that provides safe and suitable access. Consideration needs to be given to Gloucestershire Manual for Streets regarding to local car and cycle parking standards.
- 5.36. The existing barns and dwelling have an established access point, which leads to a public highway. This will remain the proposed access point for residential vehicles associated with the development. As the track already serves both the barn conversion and residential property known as Fulford, it is considered that the means of access is appropriate and acceptable.
- 5.37. The table below demonstrates that the proposed development complies with the Gloucestershire Manual for Streets parking standards for both cycle and car parking. As demonstrated on the supporting plan, the proposed cycle parking would be provided in a secure shelter.

Requirement (Minimum)	Car Parking	Cycle Parking
Gloucestershire Manual for Streets Requirement	1	2
Proposed Development	2	2

- 5.38. It has been demonstrated that the proposed development will provide safe highway access and will comply with car/cycle parking standards for Gloucestershire Manual for Streets (2020).



6.0 Conclusion

6.1. The purpose of this Planning Statement is to set out the reasons why planning permission should be granted for the conversion of an existing barns to a residential dwelling with a proposed extension. In summary:

Planning Issue	Summary
Principle of Development	The proposed conversion with extension complies with both local and national planning policies for the re-use of disused rural buildings and making efficient use of previously developed land.
Design	The design is simple and respects the existing rural agricultural architecture of the existing barns, whilst providing a new home which is of high-quality design.
Impact on Local Character (AONB)	Due to the limited physical changes proposed and the retention of the Farmsteads existing form, it is considered that the proposed development will conserve the visual beauty of the surrounding landscape and AONB.
Impact on Neighbouring Amenity	The proposed development will not result in a harm to the amenities and privacy of the neighbouring residential property known as Fulford.
Heritage	The proposed development will conserve the architectural importance of the existing stone barn as a non-designated heritage asset.
Ecology and Biodiversity	It has been demonstrated that the proposed development will not result in a harm to protected species and any appropriate habitats. Furthermore, means of supporting local biodiversity and wildlife has



	been incorporated into the barns design approach and soft landscaping.
Access and Highway Safety	The proposal will utilise an existing access point which is considered safe for use and provide an appropriate level of car/cycle parking in accordance with Gloucestershire Manual for Streets.

- 6.2. Based on the assessment undertaken in this planning statement on the supporting information provided as part of the planning application, it can be concluded that the proposed development complies with the Local Plan, supplementary guidance, and the Framework.



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