

Design summary

4.1 Cherwell Residential Design Guide SPD
The Cherwell Residential Design Guide [CRDG] was adopted in 2018 with the aim of promoting good quality design and inspiring high quality residential development in Cherwell. The guide is mainly targeted at larger, new build schemes involving a degree of masterplanning. Nonetheless, some of its contents are relevant to small scale proposals and conversions. The guide was consulted as part of the early design development process for the Proposals at Mawles Farm.

The guide is split into 8 chapters which are considered below with a commentary as to how the Proposals respond to the guidance.

Chptr 1. The importance of high quality design
Policy ESD15 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 [CLP2031] seeks to raise the standard of design in Cherwell based on a contextual approach to understanding the situation and developing an appropriate design proposal. This Submission puts forward a high quality design that is rooted in an analytical approach to understanding the Site and its context. Initial proposals were tested with the CDC through a formal pre-application process and substantial revisions have been carried out to improve the design.

Chptr 2. Cherwell's special character
The Site is within the Ironstone Downs landscape area and is part of the Sibford Gower and Burdrop Conservation Area [SGBCA]. The stone barns on Site are mentioned in the SGBCA Appraisal as being of local significance, contributing to the special character of the area around the crossroads. The main historic significance of these non-designated heritage assets lies in their serving as a visual reminder of the importance of farming to the settlement. The key design outcome, therefore, was to preserve and enhance the agricultural character of the Site. This is achieved through the careful conversion of the stone barns, reinstating existing openings for natural daylight and using the existing palette of materials including natural stone and slate and profiled metal roofing. While there is no requirement to enhance the setting of a conservation area, the design seeks to do this by reintroducing lost historical features such as the stone yard dividing wall and reconnecting the roofline along Main Street. It is also proposed to retain the piggery building and to clear away the recent accretions around it to reinstate its original form.

The conversion of the steel barn allows us to introduce more sympathetic materials to the Site: replacing the concrete wall panels and fibre-cement roofing sheets with natural stone, timber and metal roofing to complement the stone barns while staying true to the agricultural history of the Site's development over time.

Chptr 3. Responding to the site and its context
The design development at Mawles Farm has been based on a contextual, analytical approach from the outset. We sought to establish the physical, environmental, historical and political context of the Site in order to derive an appropriate site layout and basic development proposal. This included elements of historical reinstatement to reinforce the local links and history of the Site. The contextual approach thereafter extended into the detailed design of the Proposals, drawing on an analysis of the aesthetics, materials and details of the existing buildings in order to understand and preserve the character of the Site and to enhance the setting through landscape and building improvements wherever possible. The resultant design proposal is responsive to local conditions. It fits naturally within the landscape and settlement pattern and preserves and enhances the local character.

Chptr 4. Establishing the structuring principles
The site layout has been structured according to the existing physical characteristics - of the buildings, boundary walls and landscape features - and with reference to historical conditions on site. The basic subdivision is to the twin yard layout which persisted on site until the 20th century. The two new dwellings proposed are created through the conversion of existing buildings on site. This is part of the design vision for the Site - to preserve and enhance the existing character.

Chptr 5. Streets and spaces
Access and car parking detail have been developed in consultation with CDC and the OCC highways team to arrive at a proposal for off-street car parking for both dwellings. The use of off-street parking will help to alleviate any pressure on on-street parking which was a concern of local consultees.

The quality of the streetscape is to be improved by the renovation of the stone barns and boundary and field walls, addressing the effects of neglect over recent years and

reintroducing boarded or blocked up openings.

Sustainable urban drainage will be incorporated through the use of permeable paving surfaces and areas of soft landscaping. Waste management is allowed for in the Proposals with enclosed or screened bin storage areas within a suitable distance from the pavement or roadside for collection.

Chptr 6. Building and plot arrangements
The use of existing buildings and a basic site layout that responds to the differing site levels generate a composition that maintains scale, legibility and character of the Site and which is harmonious with the landscape. Distinct amenity spaces are proposed. Dwelling 2 makes use of the existing garden area on the upper site level and a courtyard garden is provided for Dwelling 1 at yard level. Privacy is ensured by design. The south gable of Dwelling 2 is largely screened by the retained piggery and is "blind", having no windows and providing no opportunities for overlooking. Many of the Site boundary walls are in a poor condition. It is proposed to take down and rebuild collapsed or unstable sections of walling, re-using the existing stone. This recognises that traditional field drystone walling is an important part of the local character and building tradition.

Chptr 7. Building elevations and details
Building details are simple and appropriate, designed to reinforce the agricultural character of the Site. Existing materials are renovated, re-used or matched in new elements. The material palette therefore includes natural stone walling, brick walling, timber cladding, slate tiles and profiled metal roofing all extant on site and locally appropriate to this specific site and building typology.

The two dwellings have been designed as part of an overall composition rather than as individual dwellings. The design provides a complementary and appropriate interplay of materials and forms which enhance the setting and ensure basic functional requirements such as natural light, ventilation, privacy and amenity. Window openings are kept large and unfussy to reflect the agricultural heritage. Unnecessary subdivision into multi-pane windows is avoided. The visual impact of window framing is further limited by the introduction of openable, solid ventilation panels beside fixed glass panels with minimal edge frames.

Chptr 8. Innovation and sustainability
There is no requirement for an energy statement for the small scale proposals within this Submission. However, some of the principles in the Ensuring Sustainable Design [ESD] policies in the CLP2031 have nonetheless been incorporated in the Proposals.

- "Fabric first" approach to improve insulation and thermal performance of building elements and reduce energy demand.
- Ground or air-source heating technologies to be used to introduce on-site renewable energy sources.
- Re-use of existing structures and materials to lower the carbon footprint and reduce waste.
- Use of low embodied energy materials and modern methods of construction (timber framing for Dwelling 2) to lower the embodied energy and carbon footprint.
- Sustainable drainage strategies to manage surface water run-off.

4.2 Other design guidance
The design proposals were developed with reference to other relevant design guidance: CDC's *Design Guide for the Conversion of Farm Buildings* 2002 and Historic England's *Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings* 2017. A summary of strategies incorporated from the guidance is given below:

- Analysis of the existing buildings and context carried out, identifying the features of architectural and historic interest and the sensitivities of the local setting.
- Ambition for high quality design that minimises loss of historic fabric and retains distinctive features.
- Sensitive introduction of daylight. Existing openings retained and re-used to create windows and doorways. New openings kept to a bare minimum.
- Wagon door openings utilised for large windows to provide major source of natural light to the interior.
- Traditional roofing and walling materials used and simple, robust details used to support the agricultural character and avoid an overly fussy domesticated character.
- Interior spaces sensitively apportioned to avoid unnecessary or clumsy subdivisions. Many full-height volumes included to allow appreciation of the character and structure of the barns. Retention of original structure and materials.
- Comprehensive landscape scheme to preserve and enhance the setting with reinstated drystone walling and native planting.

Site layout and vision

4.3 Site layout
The development proposal is based on references to the historical layout of the Mawles Farm site (fig. 14) and an evolution of its current condition (fig. 15).

The Proposal is to reinstate the historic division of Mawles Farm into 2 yards to form the curtilage for 2 new dwellings created by conversion of existing farm buildings.

The Proposals also include reinstating the connection of the main barn range to the adjacent terraced cottage through the construction of a new roof structure. This will incorporate vehicle access from Main Street and provide ecological mitigation and enhancement. Each dwelling will have its own private amenity areas and off-street parking (fig. 16).

Dwelling 2, while being of similar overall height to the stone barn ranges has capacity for an upper level which will contain living spaces and have access to the upper garden level of the existing site.

4.4 Design vision
Figure 17 opposite summarises the design vision for the Site: restore, reinstate and enhance.

Under this approach, the significant buildings on site are to be repaired and restored to a new use in order to preserve them for the longer term; lost historical features are to be reinstated; and the setting improved in order to enhance the immediate site and wider conservation area.

- Legend
- Existing agricultural buildings
 - Amenity areas
 - Vehicle access locations

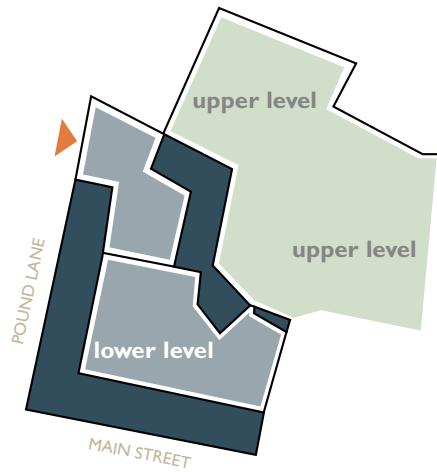


Fig. 14 - Historical arrangement

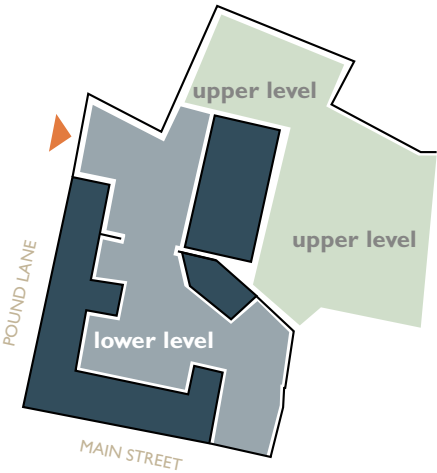


Fig. 15 - Existing arrangement

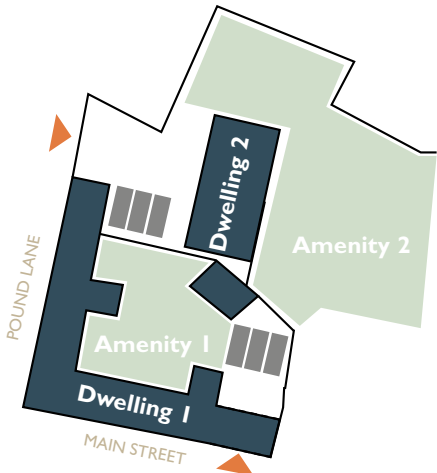


Fig. 16 - Proposed arrangement

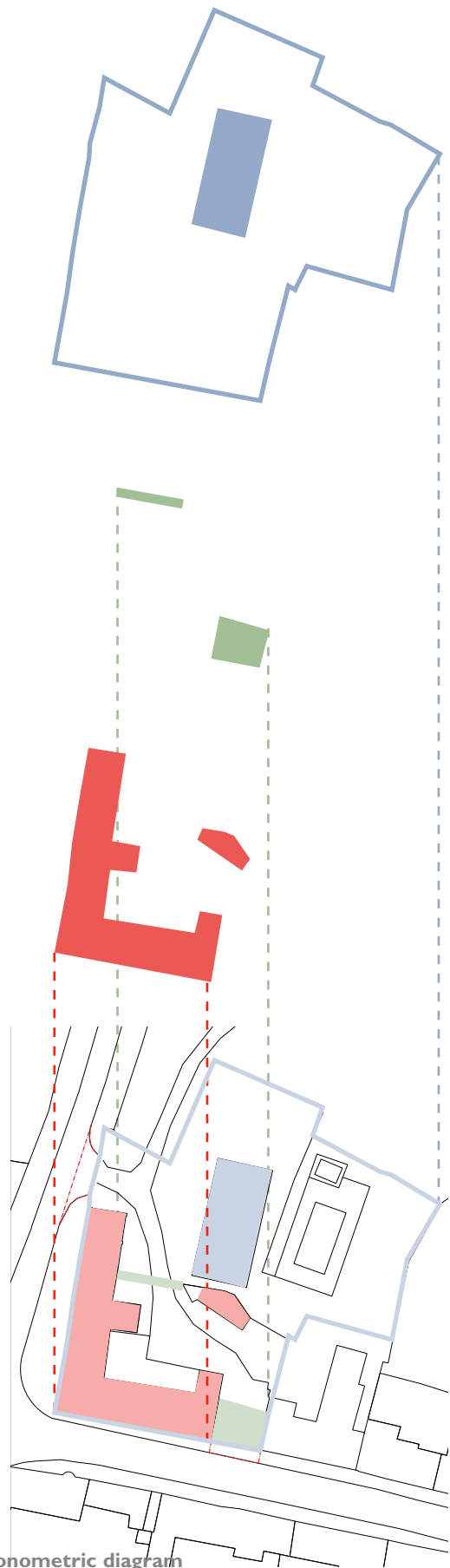


Fig. 17 - Exploded axonometric diagram

- Enhance
The setting of the locally significant buildings is improved through the conversion of the steel barn and the introduction of more sympathetic materials to complement the main barn ranges. The landscaping is improved through the restoration of drystone walling features, native planting and biodiversity enhancements.
- Reinstate
Reintroduction of historic features into the site: the stone dividing wall between the two areas of yard and the building roofline linking to the cottage terrace adjacent.
- Restore
The repair and sympathetic conversion of locally significant buildings and the piggery.

Context, character and materials

4.5 Physical context
Mawles Farm sits at the heart of Sibford Gower. It is located directly adjacent to the village crossroads at the intersection between Main Street, Pound Lane and Colony Road. The application site is surrounded on three sides by residential dwellings with pasture land to the north. The topography of the area is undulating with a prevailing north to south gradient.

The outer walls of the main stone barn ranges form the street line to Pound Lane and Main Street. This strong corner is the central characteristic of the Mawles Farm character area around the crossroads (fig. 20). On the approach to the Site, the steeply sloping embankment on the east side of Pound Lane and associated hedgerows screen the interior of the Site such that the steel barn is hidden (fig. 18) until viewed from directly opposite the entrance gate on Pound Lane. The conversion of the steel barn provides an opportunity to improve the setting of the main barn range from this viewpoint.

On the northern approach, the easterly setback of Mawles Farm from the road allows a view of the end of Carter's Yard, a grade II listed house on the crossroads. This is seen against the setting of the western stone wall and northern gable of Mawles Farm main barn range (fig. 18). These elevations and the corner aspect of Mawles Farm add positively to the setting of the conservation area and the adjacent heritage assets and should be preserved or enhanced.

4.6 Historical context
Mawles Farm comprises a collection of redundant farm buildings which date from the 18th (possibly 17th) century through to the 1990s. The most prominent of the buildings is the L-shaped stone barn range which follows the south and west perimeter of the site. Within this succession of adjoining structures is a cart shed and loading bay, milking parlour and a threshing barn. A small piggery stands within the yard directly in front of the south gable of a steel pole barn constructed in the late 1990s. The steel barn is cut into the existing terrain and serves as a retaining structure for higher ground to the north and east.

The prominent location and visual link to the farming history of the village justifies acknowledgement of the stone barns at Mawles Farm within the conservation area appraisal as undesigned heritage assets which make a positive contribution to the surroundings.



Fig. 18 - View of site at Pound Lane entrance



Fig. 19 - Approach to Mawles Farm looking south down Pound Lane

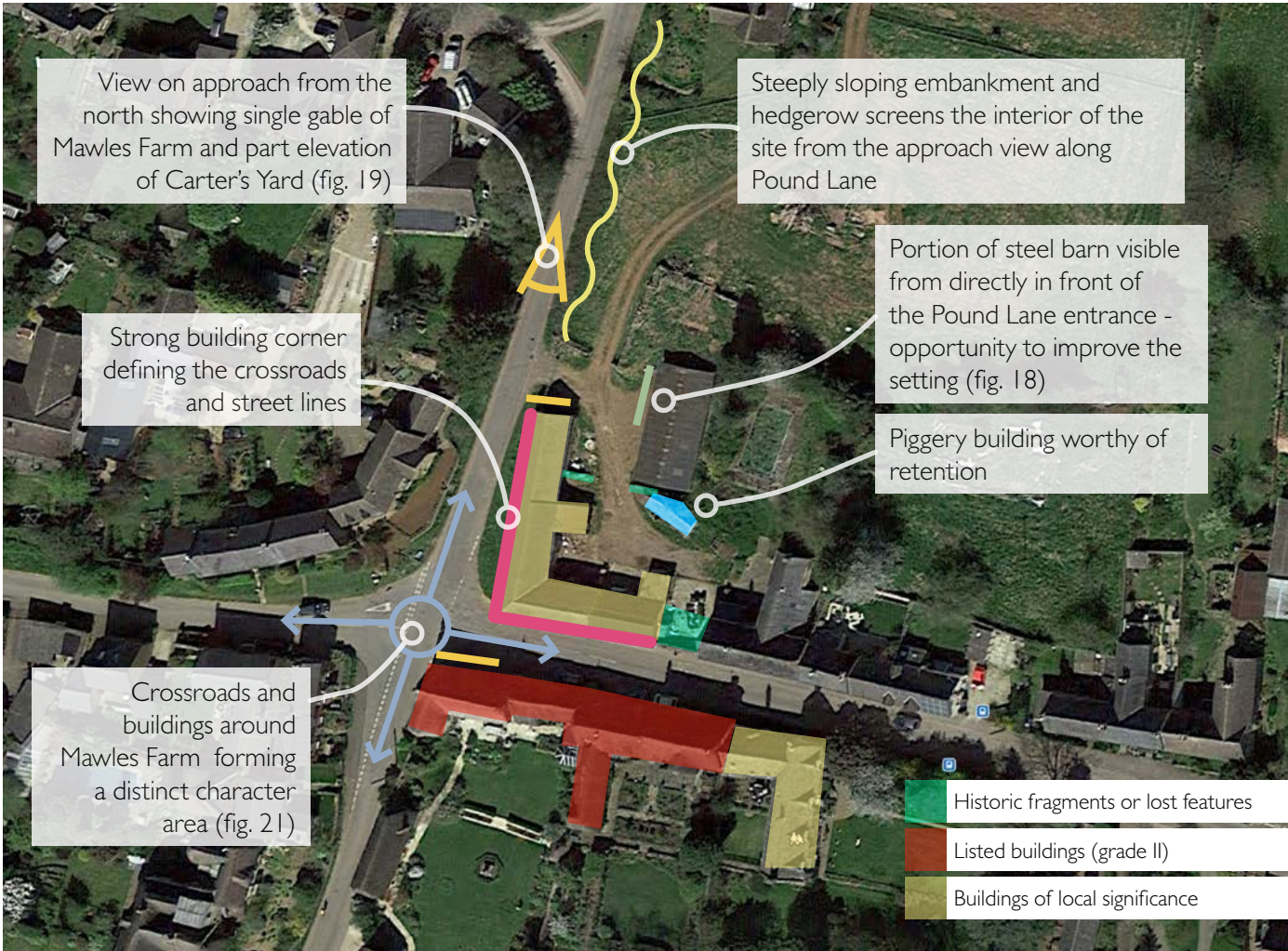


Fig. 20 - Mawles Farm contextual analysis summary



Fig. 21 - Mawles Farm on corner of crossroads between Main Street and Pound Lane

The separate Heritage Statement provides more detail on the historical context for the Proposals. Following analysis of the site and its history, the Heritage Statement concludes that the significance of the non-designated heritage assets at Mawles Farm derive from their:

- Evidential value as a material record of early farm buildings in the heart of Sibford Gower.
- Historical value illustrating the agricultural origins of the settlement and, by association, the development of Sibford Gower and its relationship with local and national agricultural economies.
- Aesthetic contribution to the village setting and character around the crossroads and Main Street.

Carters Yard and Gower's Close are grade II listed buildings to the south of Mawles Farm on Main Street. Carter's Yard is included in the listing for group value with Gower's Close. It also makes a positive contribution to the street scene

at this important corner of the village. The Proposals for Mawles Farm have been designed to retain the fabric of the existing buildings and their agricultural character in order not to reduce the significance of the local heritage assets and thereby preserve the setting of the adjacent listed buildings. Mawles Farm was the last operational farm in the village, incorporating a built history that extends up to the end of the 20th century with the modern steel barn. The re-use of the steel barn and the stone barns will, taken together allow the Site to remain a ready visual reminder of its agricultural history over hundreds of years.

4.7 Response to context

The diagram in figure 20 summarises the contextual analysis undertaken during the design development of the Proposals. Figure 22 below summarises the design response to the this analysis.



Fig. 22 - Design response to contextual analysis

4.8 Existing character and materials

Despite its central location in the heart of the village, Mawles Farm has a private and secluded character. It appears simple in massing and pared back in details. The internal courtyard has limited visual access. Views into the yard are only possible from the street when viewed directly adjacent to the access location on Pound Lane. The external stone wall elevations are austere with few and large openings.

Facades facing into the Site echo this restrained character and have a utilitarian quality. Windows are typically larger in scale than on residential dwellings. There are a few doorways on the yard side. A greater number of openings overall face into the yard compared with the few openings found on the outer walls.

The existing barn range and piggery are simply designed single-storey structures, constructed of limestone and ironstone rubble with some brick details and later additions in brickwork with areas of timber cladding. Roofs are covered with a mixture of slate and corrugated metal. The latter has been identified within the conservation area appraisal as a key characteristic of the undesignated heritage asset.

The functional character of the steel pole barn is consistent with its immediate surroundings. Constructed in the late twentieth century, the building reflects modern farming practice and the need for larger footprints. The ridge height is only slightly higher than the main barn ranges and the piggery so it is not out of scale with the other buildings. However, the shallow roof pitch allows for a higher eaves to allow access for modern agricultural machinery and to increase storage capacity. This building stands in distinction to the main barn ranges and the cladding materials - concrete panels, ventilated timber boarding and profiled fibre-cement roof sheet - reflect the date of its construction and modern nature of the barn.

4.9 Elevation studies

The existing street elevations were analysed in relation to materials, character, general massing, site topography and the condition of the fabric to form the basis of the design proposals. The diagrams on the following pages show the analysis of the existing street elevations and a summary of the proposed elevations.



Fig. 23 - External appearance from the crossroads



Fig. 24 - Building and walling stones



Fig. 25 - Brick and timber additions



Fig. 26 - Modern barn

Elevation development

Pound Lane existing elevation analysis
Figures 27 and 28 below show the existing street elevation to Pound Lane and Colony Road and present an analysis of the massing, topography, materials and character forming the context for the development proposals.

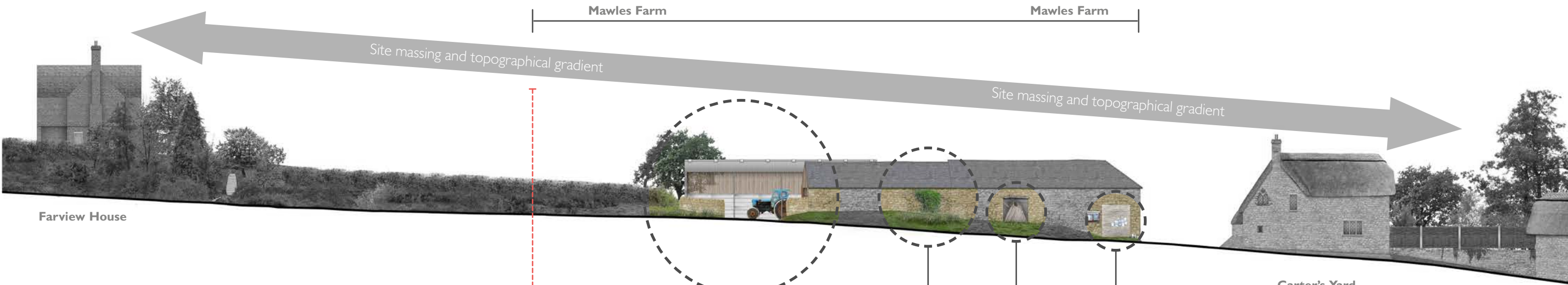


Fig. 27 - Pound Lane/Colony Road - massing, topography and building condition

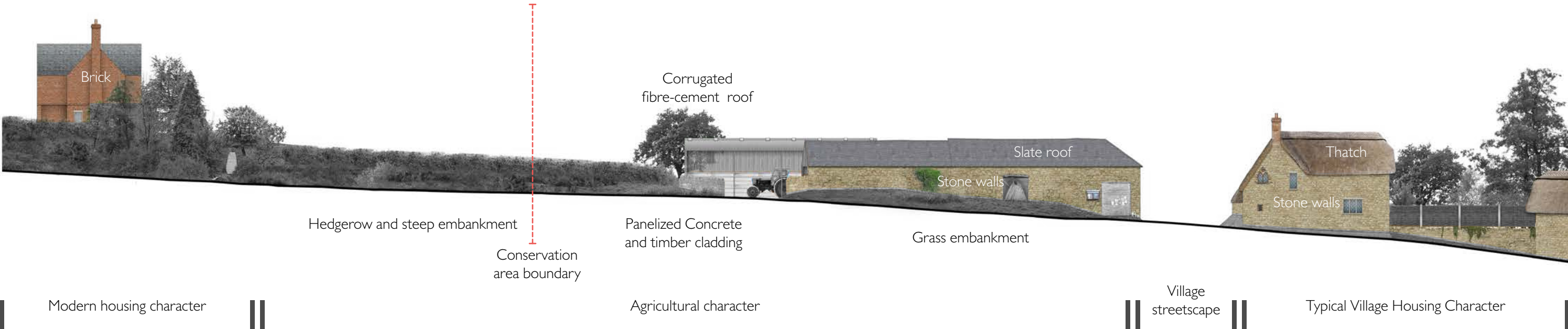


Fig. 28 - Pound Lane/Colony Road - character and materials

Pound Lane existing and proposed elevation
Figure 29 below shows the proposed elevation and how it sits within the local physical context to retain the agricultural character of the site. The existing elevation is shown below for comparison.



Fig. 29 - Pound Lane/Colony Road - proposed and existing elevations

Main Street elevation
 Figures 30 and 31 below show the existing Main Street elevation and present an analysis of the massing, topography, materials and character forming the context for the development proposals.

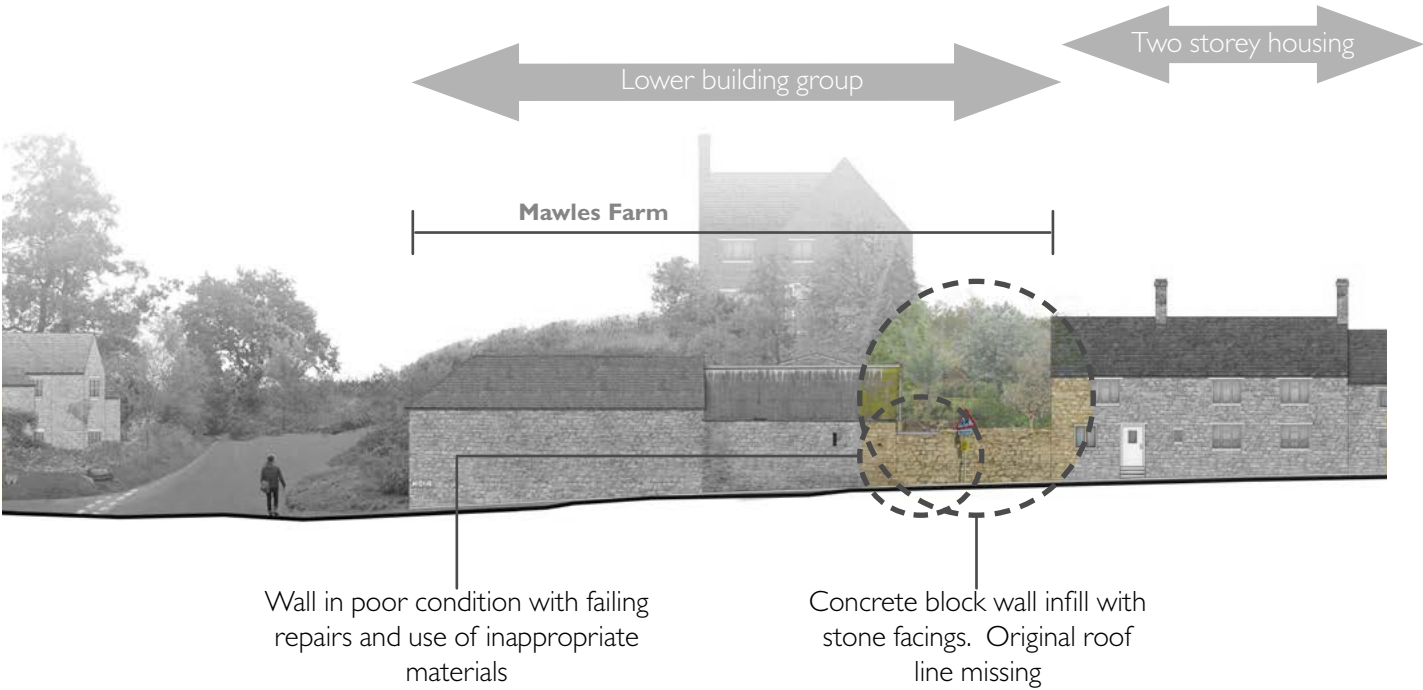


Fig. 30 - Main Street - massing, topography and building condition

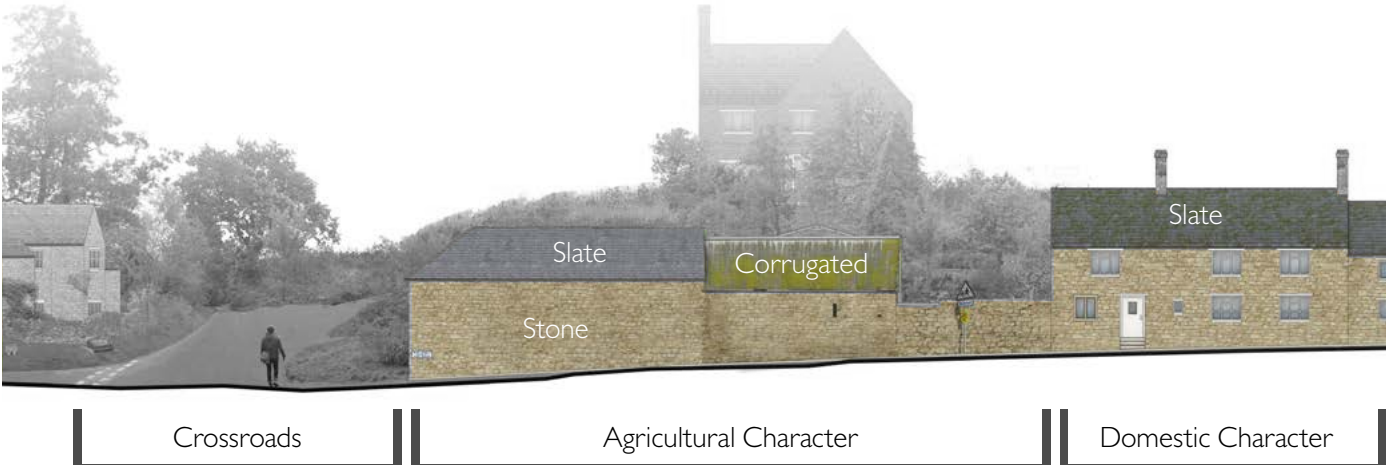


Fig. 31 - Main Street - character and materials

Figure 32 below shows the proposed elevation and how it sits within the local physical context to retain the agricultural character of the site. The existing elevation is shown below for comparison.

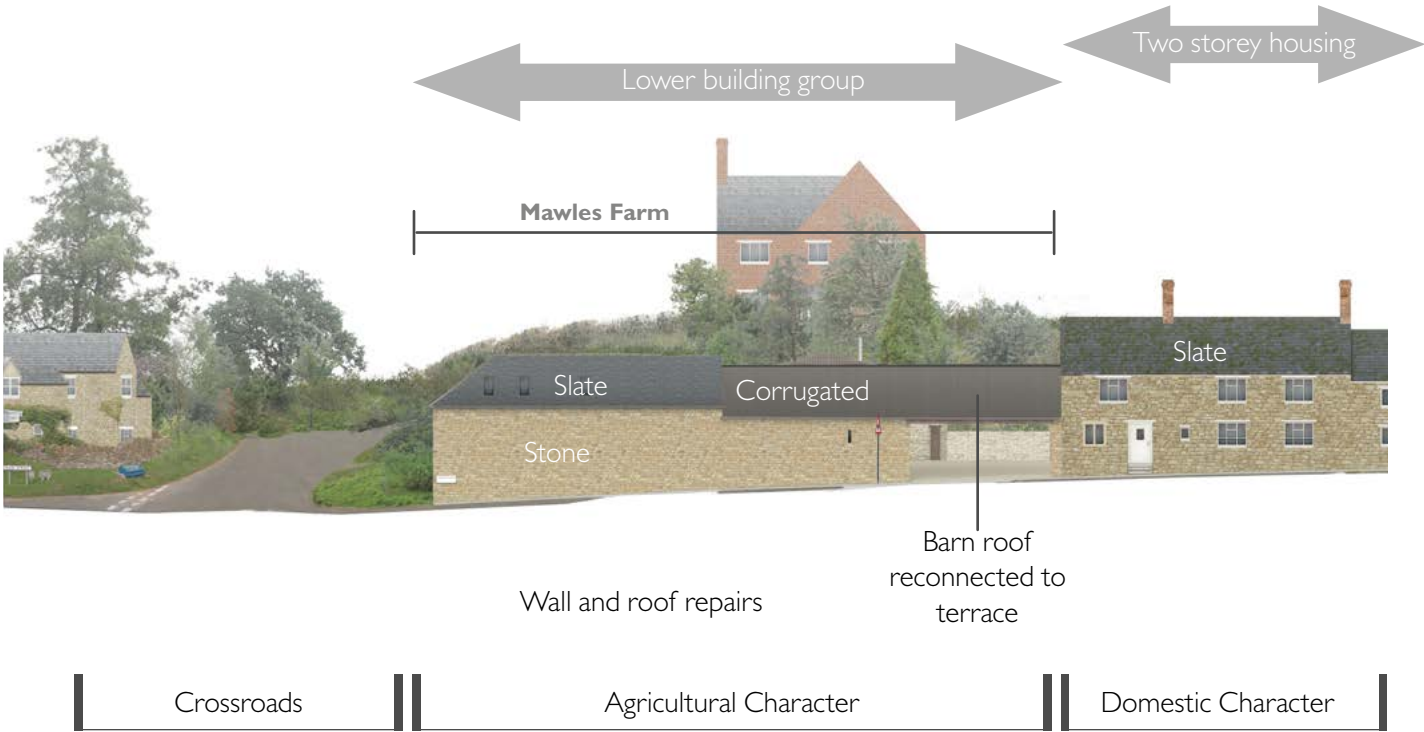


Fig. 32 - Main Street - proposed and existing elevations

Materials and facade design

4.10 Detailed elevation Studies
Figures 34 and 35 illustrate the approach to elevation design and materiality for the conversion of the main barn range and the modern barn.

Given its local significance, design interventions in the barn range will be minimal. The primary fabric of the building will be retained and repaired. Existing openings will be reused to provide window and door openings. Where infill or demolition is required, it will be restricted to the inner facades facing away from the street and undertaken in a

manner that respects the agricultural character of the site, using timber and glass within larger openings. Details will match existing for replacement and restoration work. New elements such as windows and doors will be simply detailed and robust to reflect the agricultural character.

Figure 33 below shows this approach applied to the existing opening on the south-west corner of the main barn range.

The modern barn conversion retains the general form and proportion of the existing barn but adds a palette of more sympathetic materials and introduces openings to echo the scale and proportions of the main barn range.

In elevation, the lower level is clad natural stone to match the main barn range. Timber cladding on the upper level references a typical ventilated timber screen pattern common on agricultural buildings of this age.

Metal sheet roofing with standing seams is proposed for the roof to complete the utilitarian material palette and details provide a robust visual quality that complements the main stone and brick barn range and is appropriate to the agricultural setting.



Fig. 33 - Study of the south west corner of the stone and brick barn range



Fig. 34 - Study of the west elevation of the new dwelling house

Landscaping and amenity



Key:

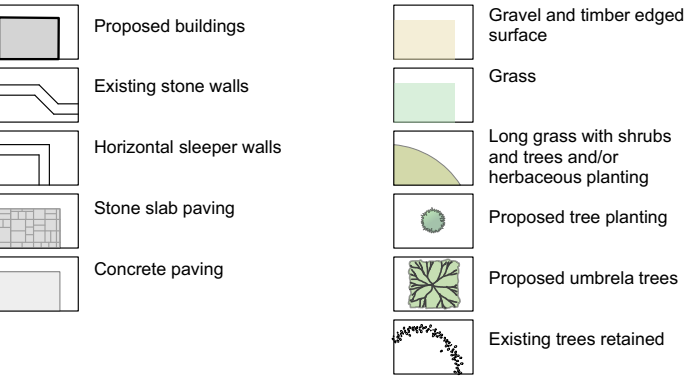


Fig 35 - Landscape plan



1. Gravel yards and paths



2. Piggery retained and restored



3. Pleached hedgerow and drystone wall



4. Accessible stair



5. Existing trees



6. Wildflower and rough grass boundaries

4.11 Landscape and amenity

Hard and soft landscaping is proposed in a design that retains the farm courtyard character to the lower ground levels while providing the necessary amenity space for the dwellings. The upper, existing garden level is hidden from the street view and provides a contrasting informal garden character (fig. 35).

The landscape proposal includes reinstatement and repair of drystone walling to enhance the agricultural character of the setting. Mature trees are retained and supplemented to the boundaries for enhanced biodiversity and to preserve the useful screening effects of mature planting. The landscape layout also supports privacy.

The terrace has been positioned to the east of Dwelling 2, using the piggery roof for screening the inhabited areas of Dwelling 1 and supplementing this with a line of additional screen planting to avoid any potential overlooking from one dwelling's garden to the other. The upper level of the southern gable of Dwelling 2 has no windows to avoid any potential for overlooking Dwelling 1 and its garden. The diagram below illustrates the provisions to protect privacy from interior and garden spaces. Similarly, the reinstated drystone wall marking the boundary between gardens at the lower level is proposed to be topped with a pleached hedgerow to provide privacy.

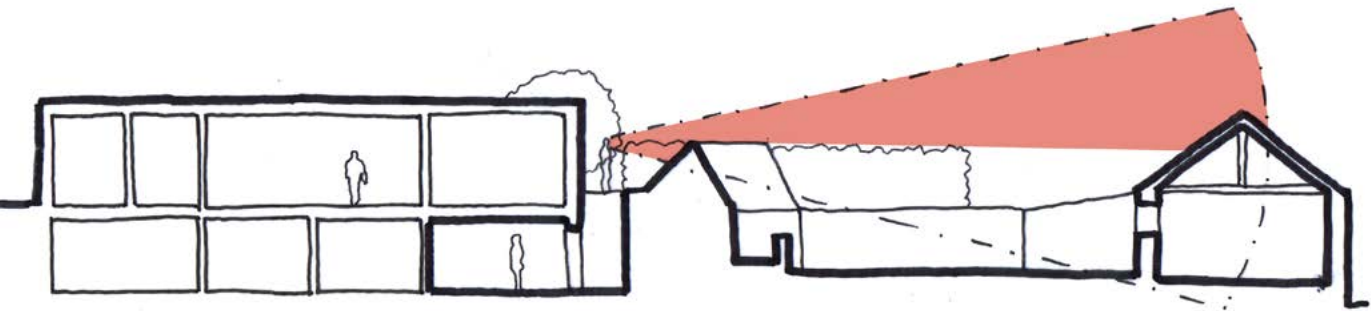


Fig 36 - Overlooking diagram

Access and parking

4.12 Vehicle access

Following the pre-application enquiry with CDC, a transport planner was commissioned to advise on the access implications of the proposed development of two dwellings at Mawles Farm. A follow-up formal enquiry was then undertaken with the local highways authority to review the revised, detailed access appraisal. The appraisal was undertaken in accordance with the guidance in Manual for Streets [MfS] and Manual for Streets 2 [MfS2] as to the suitability of access proposals with regard to physical/topographical conditions and prevailing traffic flows. A review of personal injury accident data was also undertaken to understand whether there were any particular road safety issues in proximity to the Site.

The access appraisal concludes that the access proposals forming part of this Submission are compliant with current design guidance and appropriate for the development proposal. The local highway authority agreed with the conclusion. The vehicular access points are summarised below.

Dwelling 1

A new vehicle access route is proposed onto Main Street, under the extended roof line of the stone barn range. The vehicle access driveway is centrally located within a wider opening to allow for inter-visibility between pedestrians and drivers. The visibility splays along the road are compliant with MfS and MfS2 design guidance to provide a safe access point.

Dwelling 2

It is proposed to re-use the existing vehicle access point on Pound Lane. The bank to the right hand side on exit is to be cut back and re-profiled to improve the existing visibility in the northerly direction and bring it in line with the guidance in MfS.

4.13 Parking

Parking provision has been designed with reference to the OCC's Residential Road Design Guide 2015 [RRDG2015]. Off street, allocated parking is proposed within the curtilage of both new dwellings. For Dwelling 2, this strategy avoids any parking on Pound Lane which is too narrow to support on street parking. For Dwelling 1, off-street parking avoids putting any additional load on street parking on Main Street.

Table A6.C1 of the RRDG2015 shows the car parking recommendations for areas outside of Oxford and Cherwell urban areas. The provision is based on the number of bedrooms per dwelling and whether the spaces are allocated or not. The results for the Proposals at Mawles Farm are shown in Table 3 below.

No of bedrooms	Allocated spaces req'd	Unallocated req'd	Requirement	Total Provided
Dwelling 1 - 6 bedrooms	2	0.6	2.6	3 allocated
Dwelling 2 - 4 bedrooms	2	0.6	2.6	3 allocated
TOTALS	4	1.2	5.2	6 allocated

Table 3- Car parking calculations

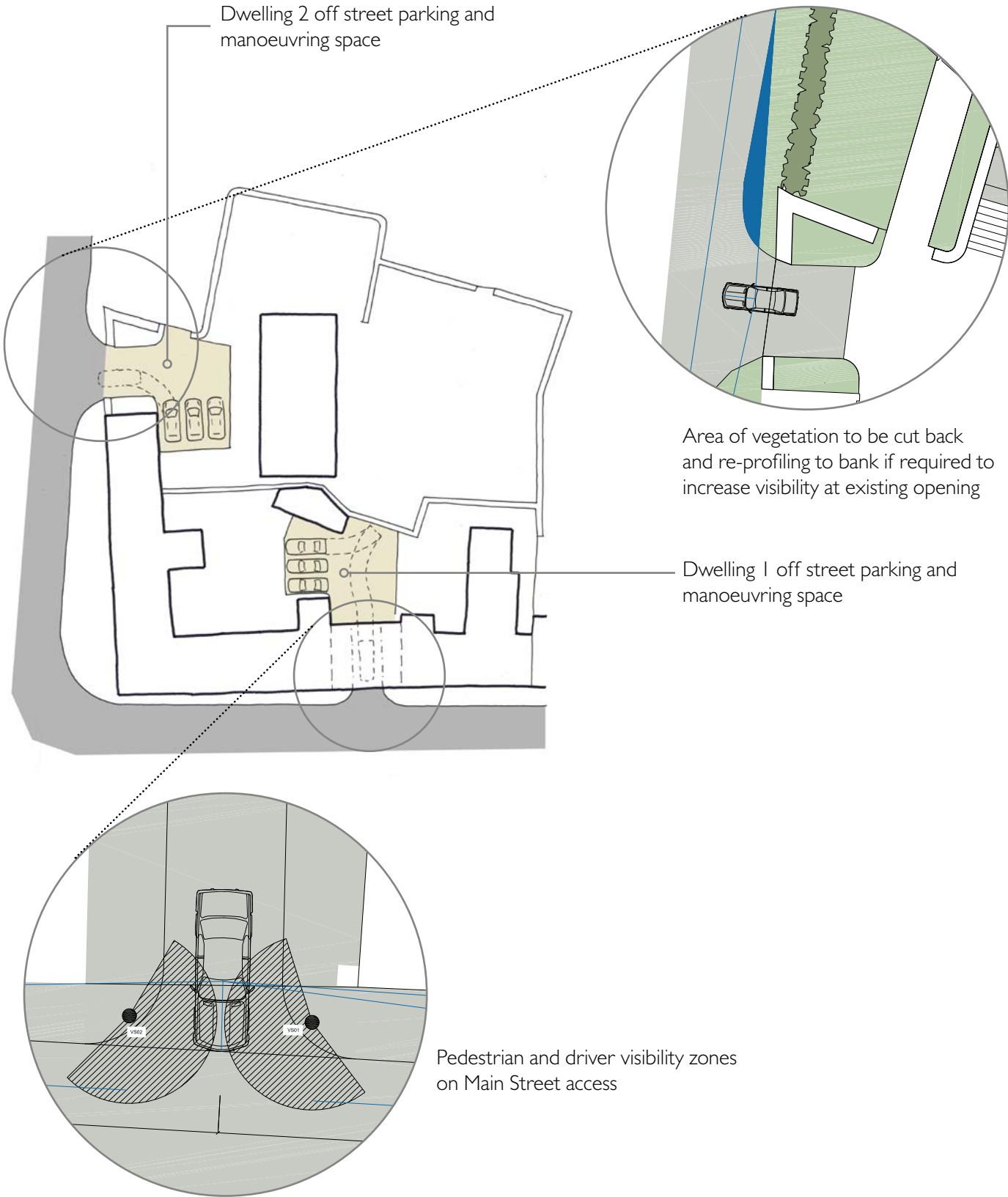


Fig. 37 - Access and parking

Dwelling layouts

4.14 Dwelling layout

The conversion of the stone barns will create a 6-bedroom family home with a courtyard style garden. The majority of the accommodation is at ground floor level with living accommodation concentrated in the north/south range of barns, including the main threshing barn for the sitting room. The east/west wing contains 3 bedrooms. The first floor level is constrained to the naturally taller sections of the barns in the south-west corner to provide a further 3 bedrooms.

The piggery building is to be used as ancillary accommodation including space for storage of bins and bicycles.

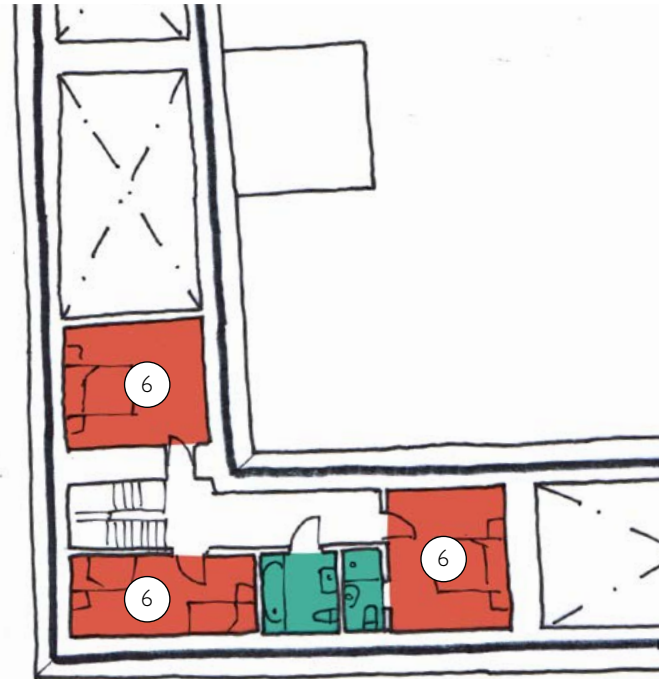


Fig. 38 - Dwelling I sketch first floor plan



- ① Kitchen
- ② Entrance hall
- ③ Dining
- ④ Sitting room
- ⑤ Study
- ⑥ Bedrooms

Fig. 39 - Dwelling I sketch ground floor plan

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ⑦ Main entrance approach | ⑩ Driveway |
| ⑧ Piggery retained for ancillary | ⑪ Plant screening |
| ⑨ Lawn | ⑫ Entrance through barn opening |

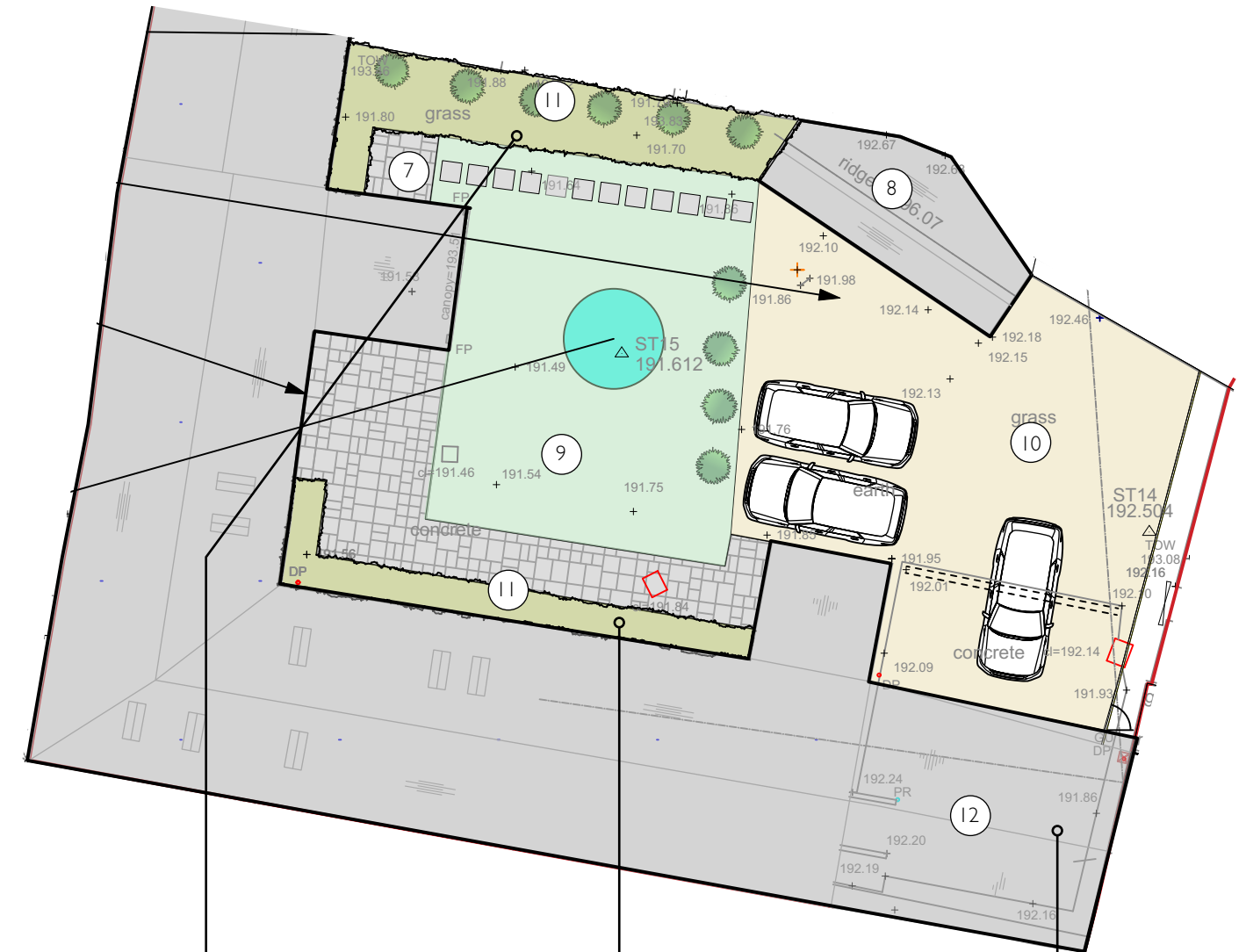


Fig. 40 - Dwelling I curtilage and garden

4.15 Dwelling 2 layout

The conversion of the steel barn will create a 4-bedroom family home with parking at the lower ground floor yard and an open, informal garden at the upper ground floor level. The bedrooms are located at lower ground floor level, with the living accommodation at upper ground floor level to make best use of the private garden space.

The layout is a mixture of open plan and cellular accommodation to suit the variety of family life. The cart shed at the head of the barn range is to be used as ancillary accommodation including space for storage of bins and bicycles.

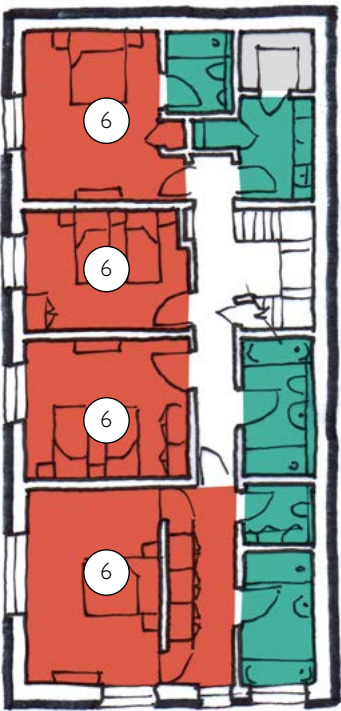


Fig. 41 - Dwelling 2 sketch lower ground floor plan

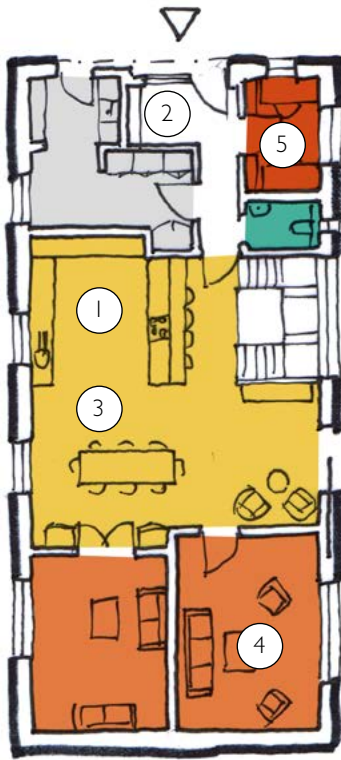


Fig. 42 - Dwelling 2 sketch upper ground floor plan

- 1 Kitchen
- 2 Entrance hall
- 3 Dining
- 4 Sitting room
- 5 Study
- 6 Bedrooms

- 7 Main entrance approach
- 8 Shed retained for ancillary
- 9 Lawn
- 10 Driveway
- 11 Plant screening
- 12 Existing vehicle entrance



Fig. 43 - Dwelling 2 curtilage and garden



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