



CHARTERED TOWN PLANNERS

PLANNING STATEMENT

Conversion of existing stone/brick barns to 1 no. dwelling and conversion of existing steel pole barn to 1 no. dwelling. Associated works including landscaping and creation of new access.

Mawles Farm, Main Street, Sibford Gower,
OX15 5RW

November 2019

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This statement has been produced by JPPC to accompany the planning application by Mr and Mrs Broom for conversion of the existing stone/brick barns to 1 no. dwelling and conversion of the existing steel pole barn to 1 no. dwelling and associated works including landscaping and creation of a new access at Mawles Farm, Sibford Gower.

The application comprises the following:

- 1901 – PA- 0001 Location and Site Plan
- 1901 – PA- 0002 Proposed Site Plan: Access and Refuse Strategy
- 1901 – PA- 0003 Site Plan Ecological Mitigation
- 1901 – PA- 0004 Floor Plan (Demolition)
- 1901 – PA- 0005 Existing and Proposed Street Elevation 1
- 1901 – PA- 0006 Existing and Proposed Street Elevation 2
- 1901 – PA- 0007 Floor Plan as existing
- 1901 – PA- 0008 Lower Ground Floor Plan proposed
- 1901 – PA- 0009 Upper Ground Floor Plan proposed
- 1901 – PA- 0010 Roof Plan proposed
- 1901 – PA- 0011 Elevation Existing and Proposed (1)
- 1901 – PA- 0012 Elevation Existing and Proposed (2)
- 1901 – PA- 0013 Elevation Existing and Proposed (3)
- 1901 – PA- 0014 Elevation Existing and Proposed (4)
- 1901 – PA- 0015 Elevation Existing and Proposed (5)
- 1901 – PA- 0016 Elevation Existing and Proposed (6)
- 1901 – PA- 0017 Elevation Existing and Proposed (7)
- 1901 – PA- 0018 Elevation Existing and Proposed (8)
- 21327-01-B Proposed New Access Detail
- Design and Access Statement by Ian O'Brien Studio
- Heritage Statement by Ian O'Brien Studio
- Access Appraisal by David Tucker Associates
- Preliminary Investigation Report by Ian Farmer Associates
- Tree Condition Survey by Ruskins Tree Consultancy
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by Ridgeway Ecology
- Structural Report by Richard Strauss Associates (Barn)
- Structural Report by Richard Strauss Associates (Pole Barn)
- Landscape Design Proposal by The Landscape Studio

- 1.2 With reference to the character of the application site and surrounding area, an appraisal of the prevailing planning policies and planning history and an assessment of the planning issues raised by the proposal, this statement sets out why the proposed development is deemed to be acceptable.

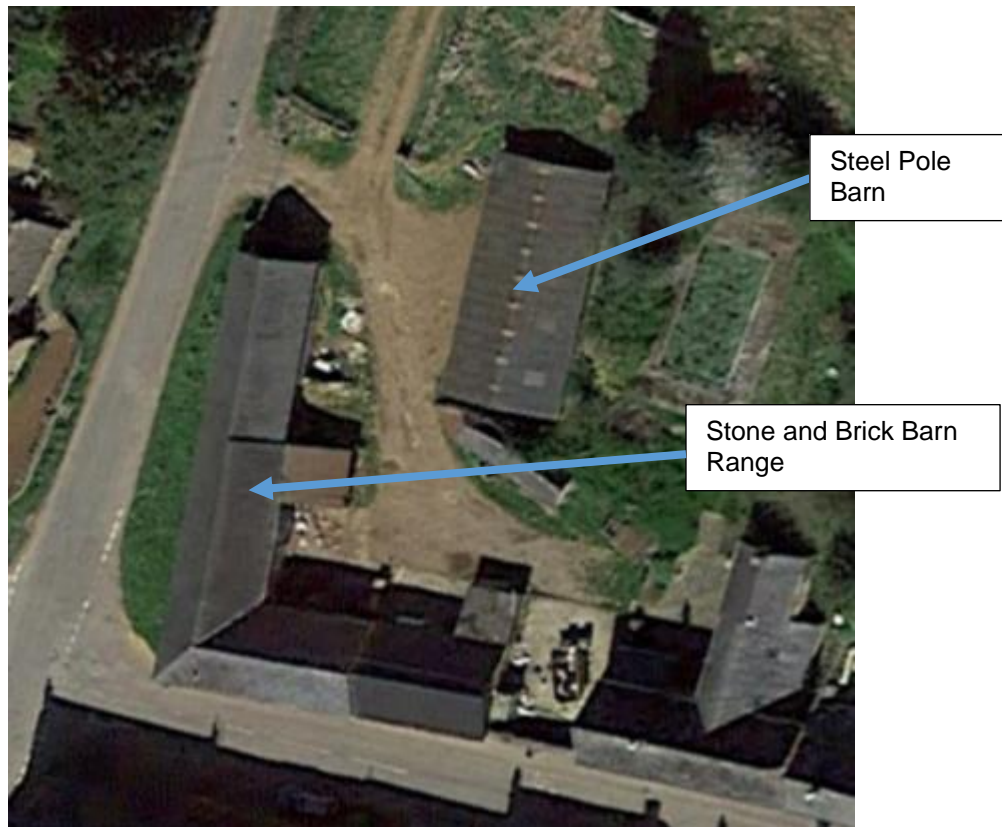
2.0 Site Description, Planning History and Proposals

2.1 Mawles Farm is located on the central crossroads within Sibford Gower which is a village sited to the west of Banbury. Main Street runs east to west and Pound Lane/Colony Lane runs north to south. The site is prominently located on the Main Street and Pound Lane junction with a range of buildings sited on the road frontage. Sibford Gower is part of group of settlements including Burdrop and Sibford Ferris.

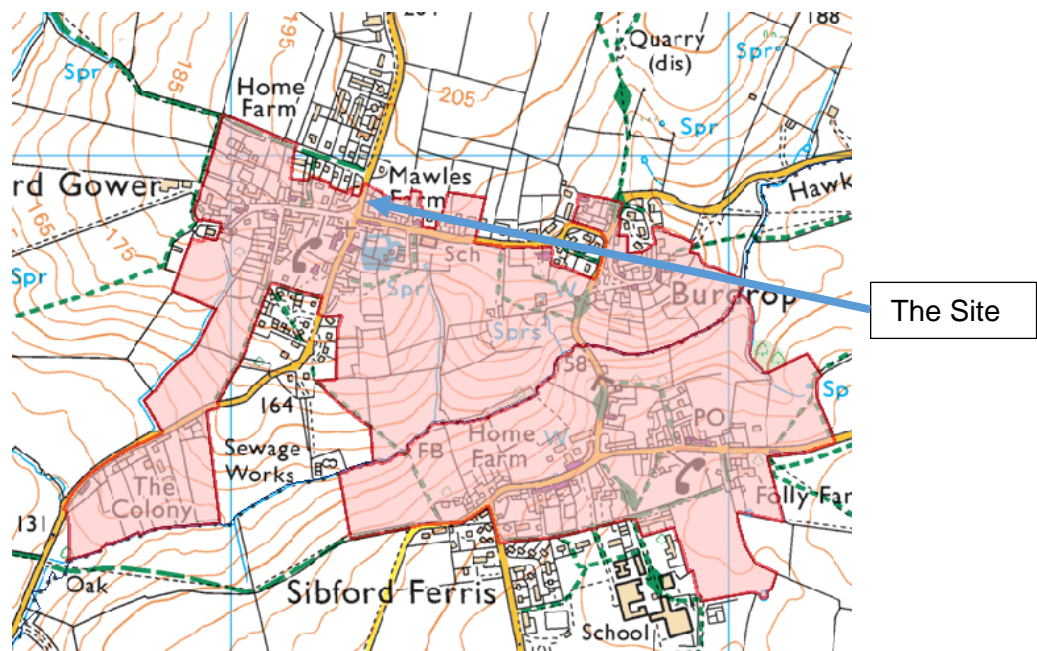


2.2 The site is a redundant farm complex, no longer a working farm. The farm has been disused for at least 3 years and following the death of the former owner the farm was divided into lots and sold. The area of land now associated with Mawles Farm is limited in agricultural terms and thus not viable for a farming operation.

2.3 This application seeks to secure the long-term future of the site by converting the existing buildings for residential purposes. The stone/brick barns sit on the frontage of this prominent crossroads location with the steel pole barn set further into the farm complex as shown on the following image.



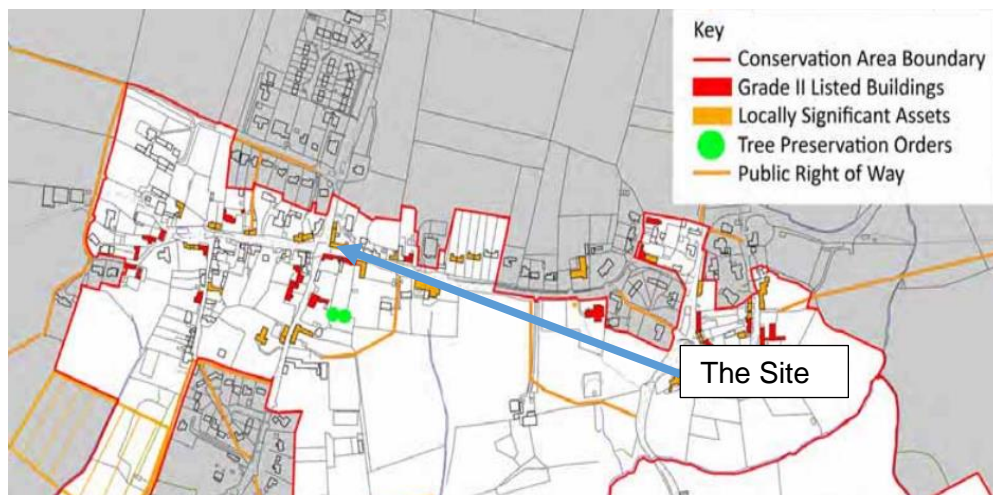
2.4 The site lies on the edge of the Sibford Gower with Burdrop conservation area as shown below.



2.5 The buildings within the site are not listed but two properties to the south of the site on the opposite side of Main Road are listed as highlighted on the map below.



2.6 The Sibford Ferris, Sibford Gower and Burdrop Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) produced by the Council identifies the stone and brick barn range as buildings of local significance as shown on the plan below.



2.7 The CAA confirms that there are no negative views across the application site and that Mawles Farm was (at the time of drafting the CAA) one of the last remaining unconverted farms in the community. It is later recognised as a non-designated heritage asset. Paragraph 9.18.5 identifies that the presence of some more utilitarian materials on the barns indicates a lack of gentrification and reminder of the agricultural origins of the village.

2.8 The site falls within flood zone 1 on the Environment Agency Flood Map within which there is a low probability of flooding. There are no public footpaths running through or adjacent to the site.

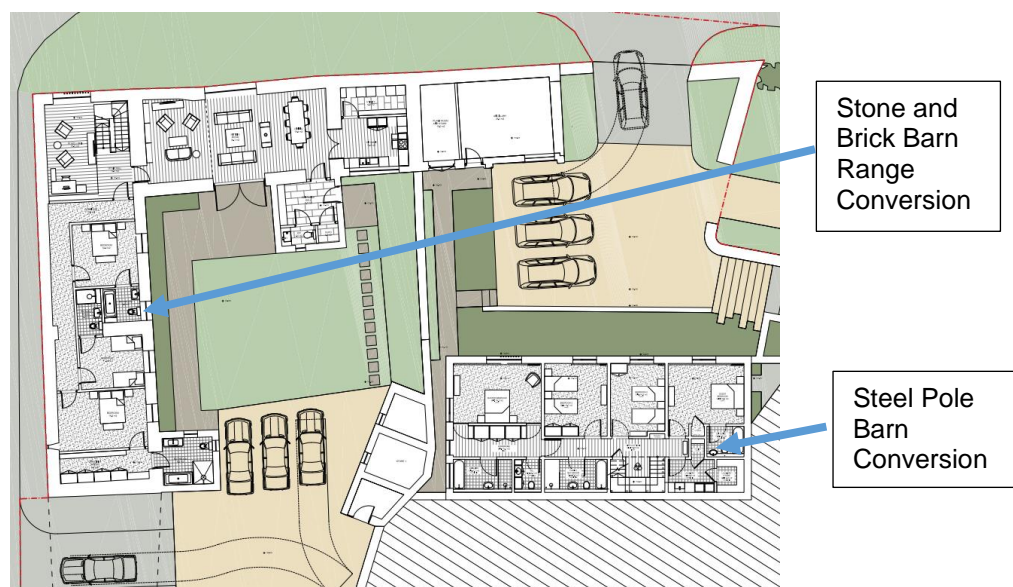
2.9 There is no planning history directly relevant to the current proposal although the following applications can be noted:

96/00904/F and 96/01167/CAC – Demolition and replacement of existing outbuildings. Permitted 04/10/96
96/01093/F – Swimming pool in existing garden. Permitted 19/08/96

- 2.10 More recently, two pre-application advice requests were made to Cherwell District Council in relation to the site under references 18/00137/PREAPP and 19/00138/PREAPP. The advice given highlighted a range of issues that should be considered during the course of this application including the principle of development, design and impact on the character of the area and impact on heritage assets, residential amenity, highway safety, ecology and biodiversity. These matters will be considered in full further in this Statement.
- 2.11 As a result of the latest pre-application advice given, changes were made to the scheme. The application now proposes conversion of the existing steel pole barn to a dwelling rather than demolition of the structure and replacement with a dwelling.

Proposal

- 2.12 It is proposed to convert the existing stone and brick barn range to a 6-bedroom dwelling and the steel pole barn to a 4-bedroom dwelling as shown on the floorplan extract below. Externally, each dwelling will be provided with private amenity space, and off-street parking. The existing farmstead is served by a single access off Pound Lane. As part of the current scheme it is proposed to create an access point off Main Street so that the dwellings will have private access driveways and parking. The scheme also incorporates refuse storage and full landscaping and ecological mitigation schemes.



Extract from proposed lower ground floor plan

- 2.13 The design rationale is explained more fully in the submitted Design and Access Statement.

3.0 Planning Policy

3.1 Under Section 38(6) of the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 there is a statutory obligation to determine planning applications and appeals in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations can include Government guidance and any other matters relevant to the use and development of land.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018

3.2 Paragraph 2 of the NPPF states that planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

3.3 Paragraph 8 provides the three overarching objectives to achieving sustainable development namely economic, social and environmental.

3.4 Paragraph 10 confirms that at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In respect of decision-taking it states that this means:

- approving development proposals that accord with the 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, granting permission unless: – the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed ; or – any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

3.5 Section 12 of the NPPF sets out the requirements for achieving well-designed places confirming that *'The creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.'* Good design can create better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interested parties is also seen as an essential part of the planning process.

3.6 Paragraph 127 of the NPPF requires that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- *function well and add to the overall quality of an area 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 of 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 the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.*

- 3.7 In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability or help raise the standard of design more generally in the area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings (paragraph 131).
- 3.8 The NPPF states at Paragraph 189 that *“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary”*.
- 3.9 Paragraphs 193 – 198 of the NPPF sets out how the potential harm to heritage assets from new developments should be assessed. Paragraph 197 of the NPPF states that, the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 3.10 Paragraph 200 then states that *“local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably”*
- 3.11 Annex 2 to the NPPF defines the setting of a heritage asset as *“The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral”*

Development Plan

- 3.12 S38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that:
'If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations dictate otherwise.'
- 3.13 The Development Plan for the site comprises:
- Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1
 - 'Saved policies' of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996
- 3.14 Other material policy and guidance can be found in the Sibford Ferris, Sibford Gower and Burdrop Conservation Area Appraisal 2012, Cherwell Design Guide (2012) and Cherwell Residential Design Guide Supplementary Document (July 2018).

Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 2011-2031

- 3.15 Policy PSD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development, follows the national policy position.
- 3.16 Policy BSC1: District Wide Housing Distribution, sets out the housing targets for the district. Policy BSC2: The Effective and Efficient Use of Land, seeks best use land and supports re-use of previously developed land in sustainable locations.
- 3.17 Policy ESD1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change, sets out what measures, at both a strategic and site-specific level, will be expected on order to mitigate the impact of development within the District on climate change.
- 3.18 Policy ESD3: Sustainable Construction, states that all new residential development will be expected to incorporate sustainable design and technology to achieve zero carbon development.
- 3.19 Policy ESD7: Sustainable Drainage Systems, sets out the requirement to use SuDS to manage surface water run-off.
- 3.20 Policy ESD10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment, sets out the ways in which biodiversity and the natural environment will be protected and enhanced.
- 3.21 Policy ESD13: Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement, seeks to enhance the character and appearance of the landscape through restoration, management or enhancement of existing landscape features and new landscaping.
- 3.22 Policy ESD15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment, sets out criteria for new development.

- 3.23 Policy Village 1: Village Categorisation defines Sibford Ferris/Sibford Gower as a category A village where minor development, infilling and conversions are considered suitable types of development.

Cherwell Local Plan 1996

- 3.24 Policy H21: Conversion of Buildings within Settlements, confirms that the conversion of suitable buildings to a residential use will be favourable considered subject to other relevant policies in the plan.
- 3.25 Policy C23 sets out a presumption in favour of retaining features which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- 3.26 Policies C28 and C30 are general design policies seeking a high standard of design in all development.
- 3.27 Policy ENV1: Environmental pollution deals with amenity issues arising from development.
- 3.28 Policy ENV12: Contaminated Land sets out matters that will be considered for development of contaminated land.

Other Guidance

- 3.29 The Council has produced a Conservation Area Appraisal for Sibford Ferris, Sibford Gower and Burdrop. The appraisal identifies 4 distinct areas within the village with 'the cross roads area with the large barn of Mawles Farm' being identified as one of the four areas.
- 3.30 The Council produced a Design Guide in 2002 that deals with the conversion of farm buildings.
- 3.31 Historic England has also produced guidance regarding the conversion of farm buildings, 'Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings: Historic England (2017).

4.0 Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

- 4.1 Sibford Gower is a Category A settlement where the principle of minor development, infilling and conversions is acceptable. Furthermore ‘saved’ policy H21 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 states that:

‘Within settlements the conversion of suitable buildings to dwellings will be favourably considered unless conversion to a residential use would be detrimental to the special character and interest of a building of architectural and historic significance. In all instances proposals will be subject to the other policies in this plan.’

- 4.2 The pre-application advice confirmed that the site is within the built-up limits of the village and a sustainable location given the level of services and facilities available in the Sibfords and Burdrop. Thus, the principle of converting the existing barns to residential use is considered acceptable. The proposals therefore fall within the provisions of Policy Villages 1.

Impact upon the Character of the Area and Heritage Impact

- 4.3 Whilst the buildings within the site are not on the listed buildings register, they are identified by the Council as non-designated heritage assets. The site is also within the Sibford Gower with Burdrop conservation area and the identified Sibford Gower Historic Village Core. In close proximity to the site there are also two Grade II listed buildings. The submitted Heritage Statement has assessed the barn complex and the significance of the heritage assets potentially affected by the proposed development and identifies the factors which contribute to (or detract from) that significance.
- 4.4 The proposed conversion will ensure that the essence of the character of the farmyard is maintained and that the important relationship between the buildings and the street frontage is retained. The character and appearance of the conservation area will as a minimum be preserved but the scheme also provides the opportunity for this part of the conservation area to be enhanced through tidying of the existing farmstead and native planting.
- 4.5 In relation to the elements of the buildings which are most prominent in the street scene, the level of external alterations has been minimised to reduce any potential impact on this important crossroads location as shown in the following drawing extracts.



Main Street Elevation As Existing



Main Street Elevation As Proposed



Pound Lane Elevation as Existing



Pound Lane Elevation as Proposed

- 4.6 It is proposed to create a new access onto Main Street to serve the brick/stone barn conversion by removal of a section of wall between the barn and neighbouring dwelling in Main Street. Extracts from historic maps within the Heritage Statement indicate that previously there was a building that linked the farmstead buildings to the neighbouring terrace of cottages. However, this link building was not evident by 1922 and presumably then replaced by an outer wall to secure the boundary. Whilst the date of the existing section of wall is uncertain the appearance and construction of the existing wall – being constructed of concrete blockwork with stone facings to Main Street - would suggest that it is a more modern addition.



Photograph of wall to be removed showing blockwork construction

- 4.7 Historically, the farmstead was split into two separate yards, as far back as 1887, presumably for functional reasons and it would appear that the split yard arrangement continued until more recent times with remnants of the dividing wall still visible today. The creation of two curtilages is not therefore considered to be out of keeping with the historic nature of the site and details of the proposed arrangement are submitted for full consideration as part of the application.
- 4.8 In terms of the impact on the setting of the adjacent listed buildings, the Heritage Statement concludes that there will be ‘no harm’ to the setting of either Carters Yard or Gower Close. It is also considered that by retaining the current building arrangement, the use of traditional materials and the maintenance of their outward agricultural appearance that the proposals result in ‘no harm’ to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The proposals will be beneficial to the identified non-designated heritage assets within the site by securing their long-term use.
- 4.9 The principal difference between the current proposals and those presented at pre-application stage is the inclusion of the conversion of the modern farm building. Previously it was proposed to replace that building with a new structure and pre-application advice was that such a structure should reflect the form and

materials of the traditional barns which are adjacent. The current proposal takes a different approach, but that is considered appropriate for a number of reasons as follows.

- 4.10 In the first instance, as the proposal is for the conversion of the existing building, policy requires that the general form and proportions of the building are retained. That aside, the re-use of the building also achieves a number of the aims of the Conservation Area Appraisal and thus will assist in protecting the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 4.11 The CAA notes that Mawles Farm was the last working farm within the village – the modern farm building (permitted in the 1990s) is an indication of that fact, showing how recently the site was in agricultural use. Its re-use will retain its form and be a ready indication of the site’s recent agricultural use.
- 4.12 Similarly, the CAA also note the importance of the materials and appearance of Mawles Farm in giving reminders of the agricultural origins of the village. The re-use of the modern barn also assists in retaining that appearance, with the proposed external use of vertical timber cladding and a standing seam metal roof providing a utilitarian palette that would be appropriate and that would counterbalance any perceived gentrification.

Residential Amenity

- 4.13 The proposed dwellings will be sited in a predominantly residential area. The closest dwellings are Fairview to the north of the site and the terraced dwellings on Main Street. Policy ESD15 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2031 requires that the amenity of both existing and future occupiers should be considered in any development in terms of privacy, outlook, natural lighting, ventilation and indoor and outdoor space. The proposed development has successfully addressed all of these matters.
- 4.14 The amenity space to serve the stone/brick barn conversion will be provided in a courtyard area to the rear of the L-shaped building. The relationship between this area and the other barn conversion is such that there will be limited overlooking from windows serving the play room in the upper ground floor of the pole barn conversion. The relationship will be a conventional residential situation where glimpsed views over gardens are possible. Regarding the amenity space for the pole barn conversion, this will be located mainly to the rear of the barn with minimal overlooking from neighbouring properties.
- 4.15 The proposed conversion has been carefully designed to provide a good level of amenity to proposed occupants providing an attractive environment in which to live. The generous living accommodation and level of private outdoor amenity space will ensure a high standard of living will result.

Highway Safety

- 4.16 It is proposed to retain the existing access off Pound Lane to serve one of the dwellings and create a new access off Main Street to serve the other dwelling. The access will require the relocation of the school warning sign sited within the pavement however this can be successfully achieved without detriment to road users. The submitted Access Appraisal report has considered the proposals in accordance with the guidance within Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2 as to the suitability of the proposed access arrangements with respect to topographical considerations and prevailing traffic flow conditions. Detailed topographical and traffic analysis based on road geometry has been undertaken to support the proposals. OCC highways were also consulted prior to this application being submitted.
- 4.17 It is also proposed to carry out some improvement works to the existing access comprising trimming of overgrown vegetation and re-profiling of the soil bank in order to achieve the required visibility splays.
- 4.18 The Access Appraisal report concludes that the proposed access arrangements are in line with current design and appropriate to support the level of development proposed. It has been demonstrated that there will be not be an unacceptable impact on highway safety and that the residual cumulative impacts on the road network will not be severe and thus the proposals accord with relevant planning policy. OCC highways has raised no objection to the proposed access and parking arrangements.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 4.19 Ridgeway Ecology has carried out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal including a Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Protected Species Assessment. There are no sites designated for their ecological value within 1km of the site. A barbastelle bat was identified roosting within the stone/brick range and a badger sett was identified in the north-east part of the site. There were also a large number of smooth newts in a swimming pool within the site and a fox hole at the northern end of the steel pole barn. It was therefore recommended that further survey work be carried out for badgers and bats.
- 4.20 The report recommends a series of mitigation measures to address the possible impact on bats, badgers, nesting birds, reptiles, amphibians and other mammals. The scheme was updated to include the suggested measures which are shown on submitted drawing 1901-PA-0003
- 4.21 The report concludes that providing that the necessary mitigation measures are incorporated into the scheme there should be no residual effects on protected species as a result of the development.

Other Matters

- 4.22 The pre-application advice requested that this planning application be accompanied by an assessment of potential contamination of the site given the historic agricultural use of the site and possible risks to future occupiers of the site.
- 4.23 The submitted report identified evidence of limited potential hazards associated with underlying ground conditions and evidence of potential sources of contamination and it has therefore been recommended that further survey work be carried out to deal with these issues. This can be dealt with by appropriately worded conditions.
- 4.24 Structural surveys have also been carried out to assess the structural integrity of the buildings and suitability for conversion. The reports conclude that both structures, with careful and sensitive repair, are sufficiently stable to be retained and converted to residential use.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 This statement has examined the planning background of the site and the relevant national and local planning policy framework in respect of the proposals.
- 5.2 The proposed conversion works would be in accordance with policies in both the NPPF and the Cherwell Development Plan and would create well-designed, attractive dwellings and secure the long-term viability of the site whilst retaining the important contribution that it makes to the conservation area and prominent location within the village.
- 5.3 In consideration of other matters including heritage, residential amenity, highways and ecology there are no reasons why the development should not proceed.
- 5.4 It has been demonstrated that there is no conflict with relevant planning policy and the Council is therefore respectfully requested to approve the application.