



CHARTERED TOWN PLANNERS

## PLANNING STATEMENT

**Conversion of existing stone/brick barns to 1 no. dwelling, erection of ancillary outbuilding to replace existing steel pole barn and associated works.**

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

**September 2020**

## **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, the erection of an ancillary outbuilding to replace the existing steel pole barn and associated works at Mawles Farm, Sibford Gower.

The application comprises the following:

- 1901-PA-101 Site Location Plan
- 1901-PA-102 Access and Refuse Strategy
- 1901-PA-103 Site Plan Ecological Mitigation
- 1901-PA-104 Demolition, Rebuild and Reinstatement
- 1901-PA-105 Pound Land Elevation
- 1901-PA-106 Main Street Elevation
- 1901-PA-107 Existing Plan
- 1901-PA-108 Lower Ground Floor Plan
- 1901-PA-109 Upper Ground Floor Plan
- 1901-PA-110 Roof Plan
- 1901-PA-111 Barns Elevations 1
- 1901-PA-112 Barns Elevations 2
- 1901-PA-113 Barns Elevations 3
- 1901-PA-114 Barns Elevations 4
- 1901-PA-115 Ancillary Barn Elevations 1
- 1901-PA-116 Ancillary Barn Elevations 2
- 1901-PA-117 Ancillary Barn Elevations 3
- 1901-PA-118 Piggery Elevation
- 1901-PA-119 Landscape Plan
- Design and Access Statement by Ian O'Brien Studio
- Heritage Statement by Ian O'Brien Studio
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Phase 2 Bat Survey
- Contamination Assessment Report

- 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.

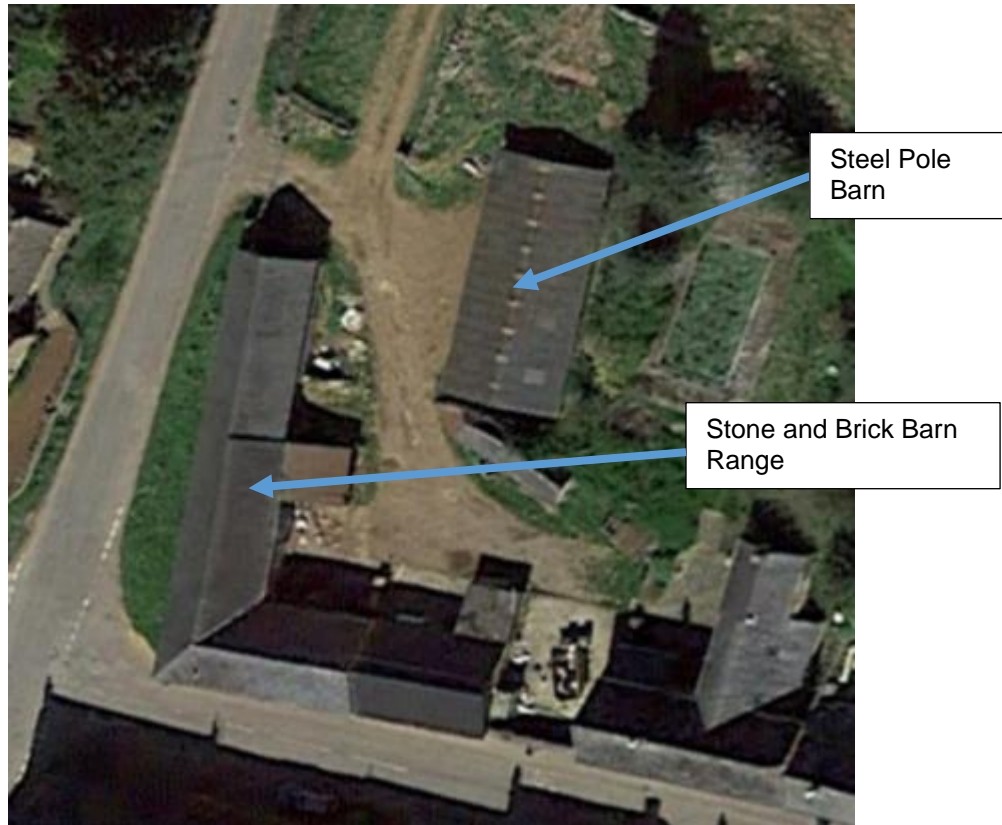
## 2.0 Site Description, Planning History and Proposals

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.

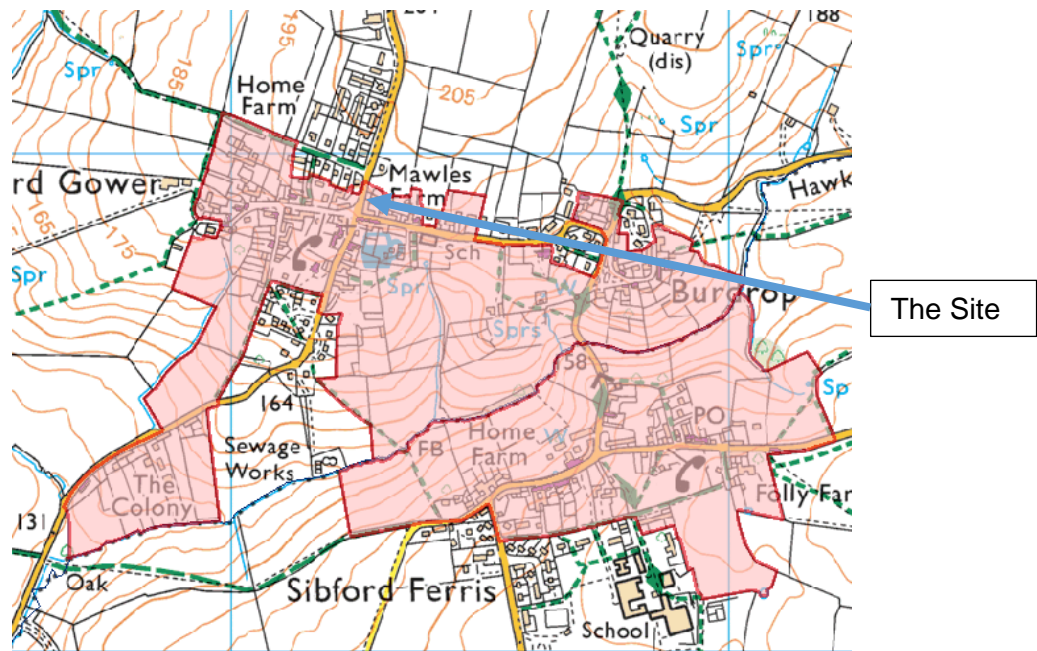


2.2 The site is a redundant farm complex, no longer a working farm. The farm has been disused for at least 3 years and following the death of the former owner the farm was divided into lots and sold. The area of land now associated with Mawles Farm is limited in agricultural terms and thus not viable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



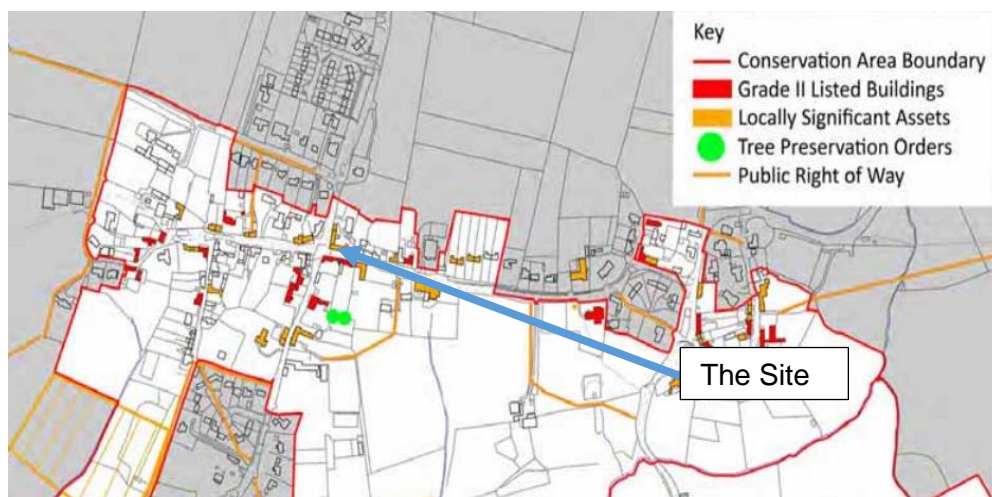
2.4 The site lies on the edge of the Sibford Gower with Burdrop conservation area as shown below.



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 Under application reference 19/02700/F, planning permission was refused on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020 for 'Conversion of existing stone/brick barns to 1no dwelling and conversion of existing steel pole barn to 1no dwelling. Associated works

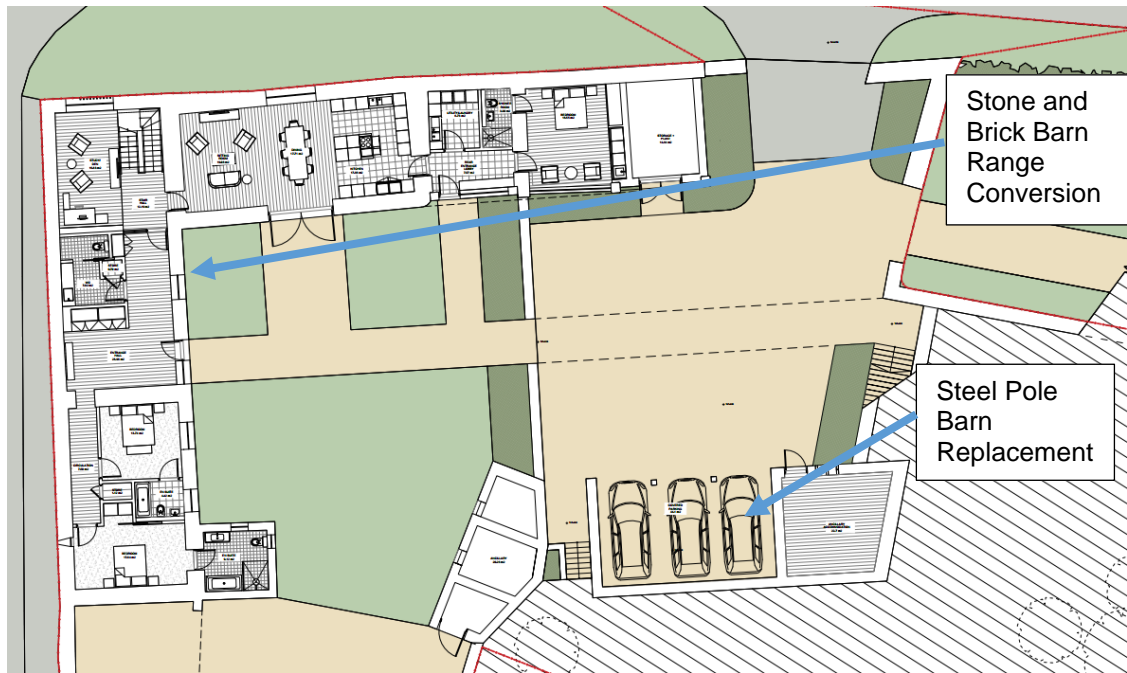
including landscaping and new access.’ This application was refused for the following reasons:

1. *By virtue of its siting, scale, design and materials, the proposed development, in particular the proposed new dwelling on the site of the existing pole barn, would fail to sustain or contribute positively to the site’s character, or reinforce local distinctiveness by respecting the special architectural or historic interest of the site as a non-designated heritage asset, and would also result in harm to the character and appearance of the Sibford Gower Conservation Area. This harm, which would be less than substantial, significantly and demonstrably outweighs the proposal’s benefits. The proposed development is therefore contrary to the provisions and aims of saved Policies C23, C28 and C30 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996, Policy ESD15 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1, and Government guidance, with regards to ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’ and ‘Requiring good design’, expressed within the National Planning Policy Framework.*
  
2. *The proposal would result in the loss of a significant section of boundary wall feature, which is an important feature within the Sibford Gower Conservation Area and which positively contributes to the setting of adjacent listed buildings, and as such should be retained. The proposal would thereby fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Sibford Gower Conservation Area, and would result in harm to the significance of the listed buildings of Carters Yard and Gowers Close through change to their setting. The harm to these heritage assets, which would be less than substantial, would not be outweighed by any public benefits. The proposals are therefore contrary to the provisions and aims of Saved Policies C23 and C28 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996, Policy ESD 15 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 and Government guidance on conserving and enhancing the historic environment expressed in the National Planning Policy Framework.*
  
3. *By virtue of a lack of appropriate ecological information within the application the applicants have failed to demonstrate that the proposals would not detrimentally impact on protected species and their habitat, to conclude that protected species would not be unacceptably harmed by the proposed development. Further, that it has not been demonstrated that proposals would provide a nett gain in biodiversity at the site. The proposals are therefore contrary to the provisions and aims of Policy ESD10 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework in respect of Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.*

2.11 This application seeks to address these reasons for refusal and puts forward a scheme which fully accords with relevant planning policy.

## Proposal

- 2.12 It is proposed to convert the existing stone and brick barn range fronting Main Street and Pound Lane to a 6-bedroom dwelling and replace the existing steel pole barn with a stone barn with a slate roof to provide covered parking and ancillary accommodation as shown on the floorplan extract below. The existing farmstead is served by a single access off Pound Lane and it is proposed to re-use this access to serve the proposed dwelling. The proposals also incorporate refuse storage and full landscaping and ecological mitigation measures.



*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
  - The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) Partial Review – Oxford’s Unmet Housing Need
  - ‘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 There was no in principle objection to the previous proposals to create two dwellings on the site and thus it is assumed that the proposed scheme for a single dwelling will also be acceptable in principle.

***Impact upon the Character of the Area and Heritage Impact***

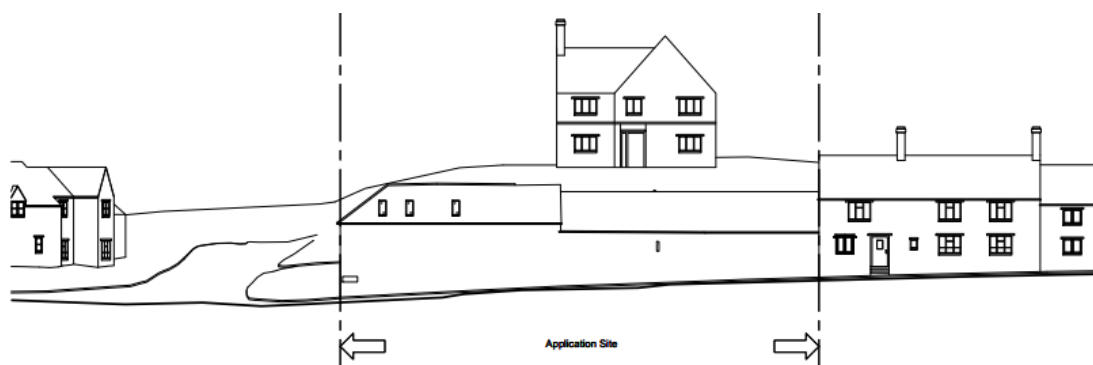
- 4.3 Whilst the buildings within the site are not on the listed buildings register, they are identified by the Council as non-designated heritage assets. The site is also within the Sibford Gower with Burdrop conservation area and the identified Sibford Gower Historic Village Core. In close proximity 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. The Main Street elevation will only require minor changes to facilitate the conversion along with the re-instatement of a historic link roof element.

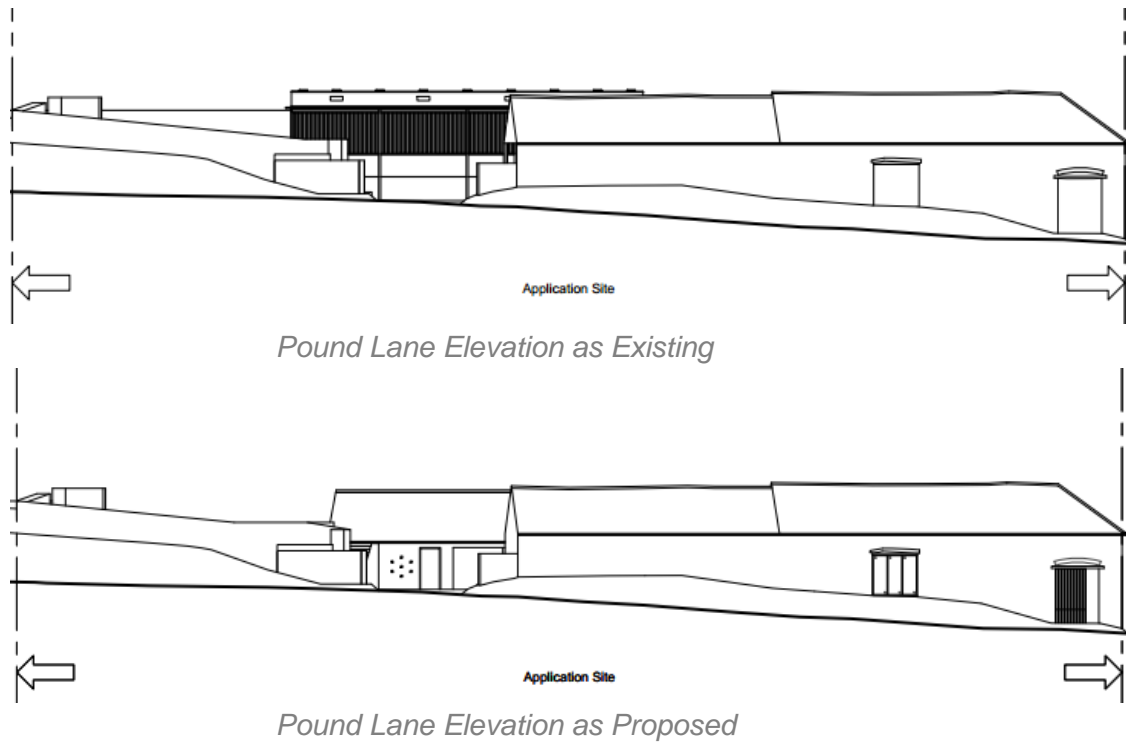


*Main Street Elevation As Existing*



*Main Street Elevation As Proposed*

- 4.6 The Pound Lane elevation will only require minor changes to facilitate the conversion including the repair of a section of wall that is in poor condition. The ancillary building has been carefully designed to sit behind the existing building with a similar ridge height to barns at the front of the site to ensure that the new building doesn't dominate the site.



- 4.7 It is proposed to re-instate the historic link roof structure between the barn and the end terrace cottage fronting 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 – being constructed of concrete blockwork with stone facings to Main Street - would suggest that it is a more modern addition. As this section of wall is in poor condition, it is proposed to demolish it and re-build in local natural stone. The new roof area will also incorporate a bat loft.



Photograph of wall to be rebuilt showing blockwork construction

- 4.8 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. It is proposed to rebuild the existing sections of dividing wall and reinstate sections of the historic wall to matching the existing remnants. This will be beneficial to the historic appearance of the site.
- 4.9 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 or the subject barns, non-designated heritage assets. 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.
- 4.10 The principal difference between the current proposals and the refused scheme is the reduction in the number of dwellings proposed for the site and replacing the more modern agricultural building with a structure that is more in keeping with the historic character of the site and supporting the aims set out in the Conservation Area Appraisal and thus will assist in protecting the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 4.11 The Conservation Area Appraisal also notes the importance of the materials and appearance of Mawles Farm in giving reminders of the agricultural origins of the village. Conversion of the traditional barn range and replacement of the modern barn with a more sympathetic structure will help to reinforce the agricultural origins of the site whilst also securing the site in the long-term.

*Residential Amenity*

- 4.12 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.
- 4.13 The primary amenity space to serve the dwelling will be a courtyard area to the front of the dwelling separated from the proposed parking area by the reinstated yard wall. Additionally, there will be a further area of amenity space to the rear of the side of the new ancillary building. 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*

- 4.14 It is proposed that the site will now be served by only the existing access off Pound Lane to serve the dwelling. The previously proposed access from Main Street has been removed from the scheme. The Pound Land access arrangement was proposed as part of the previous application and no objection to such an arrangement was received from County Highways. Overgrown vegetation will be cut back to ensure that the required visibility splays can be provided.
- 4.15 Parking for three vehicles will be provided in the new ancillary building and a secure area for cycle storage. A suitable turning area will also be provided in front of that building so that vehicles can leave the site using a forward gear thus ensuring that there will not be an unacceptable impact on highway safety and that the residual cumulative impacts on the road network will not be severe.

*Ecology and Biodiversity*

- 4.16 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 evidence of swallows nesting within the barns. A fox hole is located at the northern end of the steel pole barn. Further surveys were undertaken in respect of bats.
- 4.17 The report recommends a series of mitigation measures to address the possible impact on bats and birds and biodiversity. The proposed scheme includes such mitigation measures which are shown on submitted drawing 1901-PA-103. It is proposed to create a bat loft in the new linking roof at the eastern end of the barns.
- 4.18 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.

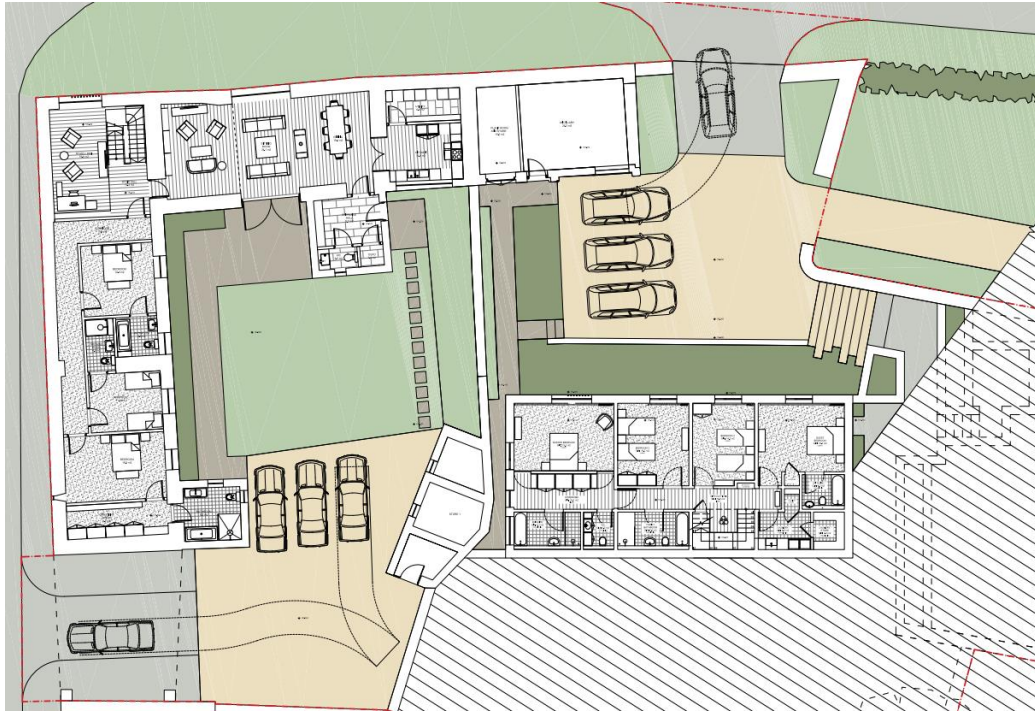
*Other Matters*

- 4.19 The application is accompanied by a contamination assessment. 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.
- 4.20 A Structural survey has also been carried out to assess the structural integrity of the buildings and suitability for conversion. The report concludes that the barn structure, with careful and sensitive repair, is sufficiently stable to be retained and converted to residential use.

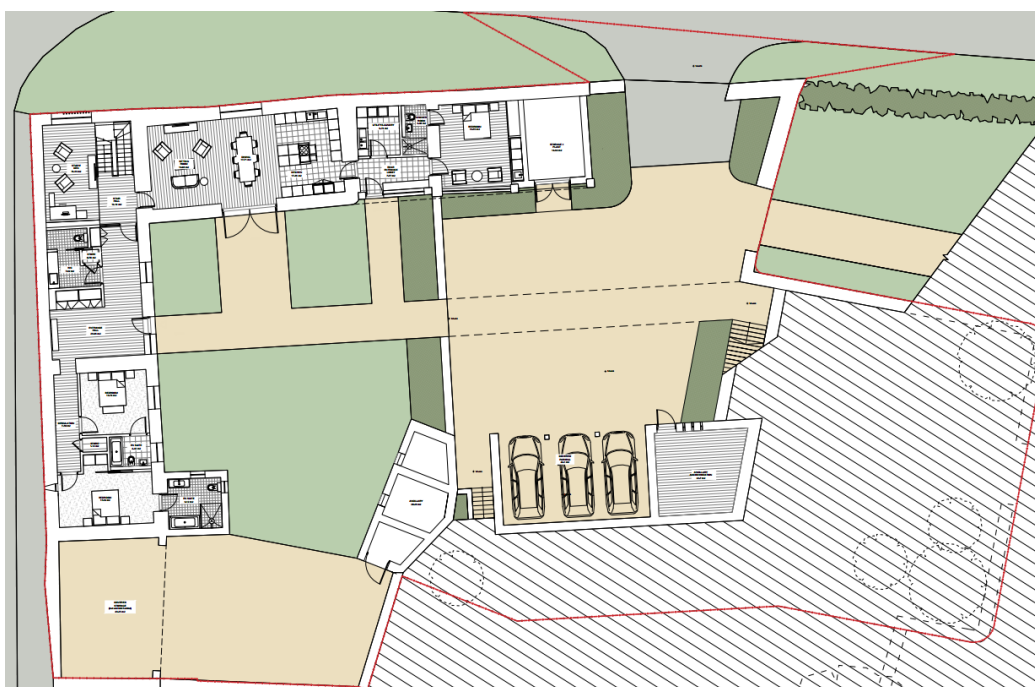
*Previous Reasons for Refusal*

*Refusal Reason 1*

4.21 The current scheme proposes the provision of a single dwelling within the site rather than the two within the refused scheme as shown on the site plan drawings below.



Extract from Previous Site Plan





Extract from Proposed Site Plan

- 4.22 The second dwelling, a conversion of the pole barn, was specifically referred to in the refusal reason. The removal of this element and the previously proposed second access point onto Main Street is considered to overcome this reason for refusal as the proposed conversion making best use of an existing, historic building will contribute positively to the site's character, preserve and enhance the special historic interest of the site as a non-designated heritage asset and not result in any harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

*Refusal Reason 2*

- 4.23 The second refusal reason related to the loss of a section of boundary wall on Main Street considered to be an important feature within the Sibford Gower Conservation Area and important to the setting of Carters Yard and Gowers Close. The removal of this section of boundary wall is no longer part of the proposed scheme and thus this refusal reason has been addressed.

Refusal Reason 3

- 4.24 This refusal reason related to a lack of appropriate ecological information to support the application. The applicant and architect have engaged with an ecologist during preparation of the revised scheme. A scheme showing biodiversity enhancements and ecological mitigation has been prepared and is submitted as part of the current application.

**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 scheme has successfully overcome the previous reasons for refusal for the scheme for two dwellings.
- 5.3 The proposed conversion works would be in accordance with policies in both the NPPF and the Cherwell Development Plan and would create a well-designed, attractive dwelling and secure the long-term viability of the site whilst recognising the important contribution that it makes to the conservation area and its prominent location within the village.
- 5.4 In consideration of other matters including residential amenity, highways and ecology there are no reasons why the development should not proceed.
- 5.5 It has been demonstrated that there is no conflict with relevant planning policy and the Council is therefore respectfully requested to approve the application.