

# Planning Statement

Wincote, Cow Lane, Steeple Aston, Oxfordshire, OX25  
4SG





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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Savills on behalf of Mr. Henry Squire (“the Applicant”) in support of an application for Full Planning Permission and Conservation Area Consent for the demolition and replacement of his existing home. This residential property is known as ‘Wincote’ and is located on land to the north of Cow Lane in the village of Steeple Aston.
- 1.2. The proposed development will enable Wincote to be rebuilt and extended to create a single home with more suitable living and recreational space for the Applicant’s family.
- 1.3. This statement provides an assessment of the proposed development against the development plan for Cherwell District Council, National Planning Policy Framework, and relevant material considerations, including the planning history for the site.
- 1.4. This application is accompanied by a number of drawings and reports, these are listed in the Covering Letter and Drawing Schedule.
- 1.5. This statement should be read alongside the accompanying documents to ensure that a comprehensive understanding of the proposal is obtained. Overall, this proposal is considered to represent a sustainable form of development which is consistent with the provisions of the Local Plan and the NPPF and one which delivers a high quality residential development in this location.

## 2. The Site and Surrounding Areas

- 2.1. The application site is located in the north-eastern part of Steeple Aston on land immediately to the north of Cow Lane. (see Figure 1)



**Figure 1 Site Location within Steeple Aston**

- 2.2. The application site measures 0.53 hectares (1.31 acres) and forms part of the existing house, garden and land associated with the residential property known as 'Wincote'. Other land within the ownership of the Applicant (i.e. the land within the area within the blue line in Figure 1) extends to 0.9482 (2.32 acres).
- 2.3. The site includes a single, existing residential property (Wincote), associated private gardens and access driveway and parking area.

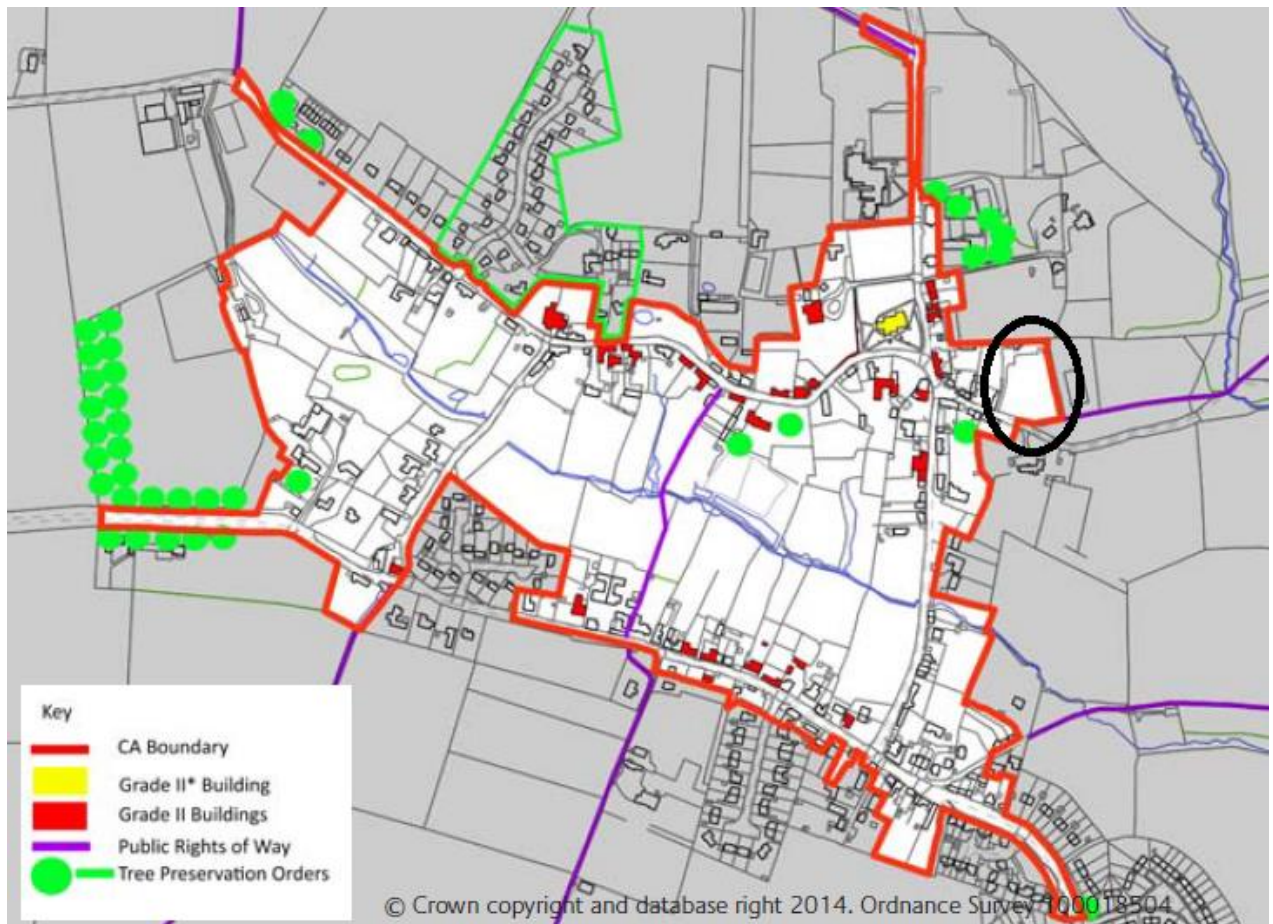
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- 2.4. Figure 1 also shows other land, immediately to the east of the application site, which is within the ownership of the Applicant and which is not the subject of any proposed development associated with this planning application. To the east the site falls quite steeply towards the valley at the bottom.
- 2.5. There are a number of trees within and abutting the site together with hedges and grassed areas forming the garden spaces. There are no trees within or immediately adjoining the application site which are the subject of Tree Preservation Orders. Trees in Steeple Aston with TPOs are identified in Figure 2.
- 2.6. The southern boundary of the site is formed by Cow Lane, including an entrance gate, and also by a row of trees and bushes. There are a small number of cottages located along Cow Lane, including one which lies opposite the site entrance. The western boundary is formed by the curtilage of adjoining residential properties, including garden walls. The northern boundary of the site comprises either of the back walls of Wincote or garden walls, beyond which is an area of allotments. The eastern boundary has been drawn on a north-south axis between the existing garden wall on the northern boundary and the line of trees and bushes on the southern boundary (this boundary is also located immediately to the west of the existing tennis court).
- 2.7. Vehicular access to Wincote is taken from Cow Lane, which runs along the south side of the site.
- 2.8. Online Environment Agency records show the site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1; land considered as having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding.
- 2.9. The site lies within Steeple Aston Conservation Area. There are also a number of Grade II listed buildings to the west on Fir Lane and the Grade II\* listed Church of St Peter and St Paul. Wincote itself is not a listed building. The boundaries of the Conservation Area and the location of Listed Buildings in Steeple Aston are shown on the plan provided in Figure 2. This plan is taken from the Steeple Aston Conservation Appraisal (April 2014). We have annotated this plan by showing within a black circle the general location of the application site in order to show where the location of the application site sits within the wider Conservation Area and in relation to the Listed Buildings within the village.



**Figure 2: Location of Steeple Aston Conservation Area, Listed Buildings, Public Rights of Way and Tree Preservation Orders (Source: Steeple Aston Conservation Area Appraisal, April 2014)**

- 2.10. Following a desk based review of the site, there are no further policy constraints which should unduly preclude development of the site.
- 2.11. A full description of the site and an analysis of the surrounding area is contained in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

## 3. Planning History

- 3.1. A desktop review of online planning records for the site has identified the following planning history which is outlined in Table 1 below.

Planning Application Reference	Description of Development	Decision
11/00114/F	Demolition in part of existing main house and outbuildings and the erection of a new residential dwelling.	Withdrawn on 22nd July 2011.
11/00115/CAC	Demolition in part of existing main house and outbuildings.	Withdrawn on 22nd July 2011.
16/00026/TCA	G1- group of multi stem Beech - remove to ground level all trees. G2- Mixed species hedge line - reduce height of hedge by a maximum of 3m. T1 & T2- Apple - remove to ground level.	Permitted on 4th March 2016.

**Table 1: Planning History for the Application Site**

- 3.2. Of relevance are applications 11/00114/F and 11/00115/CAC. Both applications were withdrawn following a period of consultation on the two applications. The location and scale of the proposed development which was the subject of the withdrawn applications was greater than compared with this planning application. The materials and architectural style which was proposed in the withdrawn applications were also less sympathetic in relation to existing buildings found in Steeple Aston than compared with this planning application. In addition, it is also noted that the applications were to have been determined in accordance with a different planning policy context to that which is in effect now (which now includes the 2015 Adopted Local Plan, the 2019 Made Neighbourhood Plan and the NPPF and National Planning Policy Guidance).



## 4. Pre-application Engagement

- 4.1. Pre-application advice has been sought for the proposed development which is the subject of this planning application. This has included receiving pre-app responses from Cherwell District Council and from Steeple Aston Parish Council.

### **Pre-Application Advice – Cherwell District Council**

- 4.2. Under reference 21/00311/PREAPP, the Applicant undertook pre-application engagement with Cherwell District Council. A request for pre-application advice was submitted on 29th January 2021 for the part demolition and extension of the existing house Wincote at Cow Lane, Steeple Aston. A meeting with the appointed case officer was held online on 18th February 2021. A response from Cherwell District Council was received in writing on 11th March 2021.
- 4.3. The response identifies that *“The key considerations for this proposal are the principle of development, the impact on the character of the area and heritage assets, the impact on the amenities of neighbours and the impact upon highway safety”*.
- 4.4. On the basis that *“The proposed extensions to the dwelling would be confined to land currently in residential use and it has been stated that the dwelling would remain as a single dwelling”*, the response concluded that *“the broad principle of development is considered to be acceptable, with overall acceptability subject to other material considerations”*.
- 4.5. The response refers in more detail to the location and scale of the proposed development, the location of the site within the Steeple Aston Conservation Area, and the visibility of the site from certain locations (including the allotments to the north). Taking these matters into account, the response notes that *“On balance, given the siting, scale and design of the existing dwelling, it is considered that the development would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The existing dwelling has a large footprint and the proposed extensions would result in a visual improvement to the appearance of the dwelling. Furthermore, the dwelling is located away from other dwellings so would not be viewed in the immediate context of surrounding dwellings”*.
- 4.6. It is also noted that the response considered that the proposed development would not affect the relationship between Wincote and the closest dwelling to the site (The Longbyre).
- 4.7. In terms of matters which the response has identified as requiring further attention, the following is noted:
- Further thought should be given to the proposed hard and soft landscaping (including natural swimming pool) *“to ensure that residential uses remain close to the dwelling itself and that this use of land does not spread significantly further to the south”*.
  - The proposed ground floor bedroom, which includes a window facing north onto the allotments, should be amended so as to prevent members of the public being able to directly overlook the users of this bedroom.

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- To address concerns expressed by the Highways Officer, further consideration should be given to “*construction vehicles accessing the site and their ability to turn within the site to ensure that they do not egress in reverse gear*”. In addition, the Highways Officer has requested that a Construction Traffic Management Plan is submitted with the planning application.
- A full tree survey would need to be submitted with the planning application.
- A phase 1 ecological survey would also need to be undertaken and the results submitted with the planning application.

4.8. Following the receipt of the pre-application response, further clarification of the proposed development was submitted to the Council by email on 25th March 2021 and a further update emailed to the Council on 29th March. The information in these two emails covered matters relating to:

- The proposed Landscaping Scheme/Garden;
- The proposed removal of the Ground Floor Bedroom;
- The proposals for a Construction Access (including the production of a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP));
- The proposed List of Plans, Drawings and Reports to accompany the planning application;
- A summary of the outcome of the presentation of the proposed development to the meeting of Steeple Aston Parish Council on 15th March;
- A summary of the outcome of a meeting with members of the local allotment association.

4.9. A further response from the appointed case officer was received on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2021. The main points raised in this further response are set out below:

- The concern relating to landscaping is to do with “the formality of the proposed landscaping spreading into the undeveloped area of the site, noting that the use of the land would not change”.
- The removal of the ground floor bedroom is welcomed.
- Case officer support for a CTMP to be submitted with the planning application, whilst noting that the Highways Officer could request additional information.
- General agreement of the plans and reports to be submitted with the planning application (subject to the site plan including details of landscaping).

## **Pre-Application Discussions – Steeple Aston Parish Council, Neighbours and Allotment Holders**

4.10. A presentation of the draft proposed development, similar to that which was given to the District Council, was given by the Applicant to Steeple Aston Parish Council on Monday 15th March. We consider that the presentation was well-received.

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- 4.11. The presentation was followed by a question and answer session which covered matters relating to:
- Whether the property be for the Squire family, or used for letting or used for other purposes (such as conference or meeting facilities).
  - The number of bedrooms and reception rooms there will be.
  - The measurement of ground levels along the allotments side of the property.
  - The size of windows on the allotments frontage.
  - The wall along the allotments frontage.
  - Whether discussions have been held with the neighbours about the proposals.
  - The full occupancy of the adjoining allotments.
  - The nature of pre-app advice received from the District Council.
- 4.12. The Applicant provided responses to these questions based on the details included in the pre-app submission and presentation, including stating that Wincote will continue to be one family home following the proposed development. The Applicant also noted that matters of detail relating to the proposed development would be addressed in the planning application submission (including in relation to the number of bedrooms, sizes of windows and the wall on the allotments frontage). In addition, the close proximity between Wincote and the allotments will be given sensitive treatment during the construction phase (i.e. to avoid disruption to allotment use).
- 4.13. In terms of discussions with neighbours, the Applicant has had informal discussions with a number of them in order to seek in principle support for the proposed development and to provide advance notice that an application will be submitted to the District Council. The Applicant also confirmed that these discussions have been positive and the proposals well-received.
- 4.14. Following the meeting with the Parish Council, the Applicant also met with two of the allotment holders (Mr. and Mrs. McCreedy). The discussion was constructive and the McCreedys mentioned that some allotment holders might raise comments about overshadowing which might occur as a result of the extension of the house. However, the McCreedys accepted that there are already allotments which are overshadowed close to the Wincote property boundary. These particular allotments are very new (i.e. they have been relatively recently been dug).
- 4.15. The above demonstrates the supportive response which has been received from the case officer, the Parish Council and neighbours to the proposed development, subject to a small number of concerns being addressed by the Applicant through the planning application process.

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- 4.16. It is important to note that following the pre-application process of discussions (as outlined above), the decision was taken by the applicant to demolish the whole of the Wincote property, with the exception of the cellar. The primary reasons for making this change to the proposals have resulted from the applicant's further consideration of the existing condition of the original cottage building and the inability of the original cottage building to be improved to the level of sustainability which the applicant requires. The change in approach has also taken into consideration the opportunity to create a better integrated house with a consistent design approach through each of its distinct sections. A more detailed description of the proposed development is provided in the Design and Access Statement and in Section 5 of this Planning Statement.

## 5. Proposed Development

- 5.1. The proposed development is the subject of an application for Full Planning Permission and Conservation Area Consent. This application relates to the demolition and replacement of a single residential property and the family home of the Applicant.
- 5.2. The original cottage, its modern extensions and all other remaining buildings on site will be demolished, with the exception of the cellar underneath the original cottage which will be retained. The demolished buildings will be replaced with new buildings in order to create one single, connected house and barn. The new buildings will all be connected to each other. The direct replacement for the original cottage building will be a new 2 storey cottage which will be designed to reflect the local vernacular. Next to this will be a single storey connection block made from glass and timber. On the eastern end of the property will be what is described as the 'barn' which will contain social and living areas and be designed in a slightly more contemporary style. In addition, a separate building comprising a pool house will be constructed immediately next to the proposed natural swimming pool, which will be provided within the garden of Wincote.
- 5.3. The existing buildings on site extend to approximately 338sqm (GEA). After the demolition and the replacement of Wincote (including the retained cellar), the total floor area of the new house will be approximately 602sqm. In addition, the floorspace of the pool house will be 35sqm.
- 5.4. The replacement residential property will continue to be aligned along its existing west-east axis, along the northern boundary of the site, with two southward protrusions in the centre and eastern parts of the property.
- 5.5. In terms of access and parking, there will be an arrival area towards the front of the property where cars can be parked and delivery vehicles can turn around and exit.
- 5.6. The existing patios and gardens will be redesigned with hard and soft landscaping. A natural swimming pool will also be provided within the garden along with a small single storey pool house that will mimic the language of the main property.
- 5.7. Materials for the proposed development will be similar to those used in other properties within the area. Walls will be constructed of/faced in limestone. The roof will be of slate. Windows and doors are to be of a metal framed casement design, painted in an approved colour.
- 5.8. Materials used would be appropriately sourced to reflect the style and build of the built up area. Specific design details have been closely informed by local vernacular. The accompanying Design and Access Statement should be referred to for further detail of the proposed design approach.

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- 5.9. As part of the proposed development, a temporary construction access is proposed on Cow Lane in the location of the current site access. This proposal would require the removal of trees in order to widen the existing access so that construction vehicles can enter the site without having to turn and reverse into the site on Cow Lane. This proposal is intended to minimise disturbance to neighbours. As part of the proposed development it is also proposed that the removal of these trees will be compensated through their replacement on site; and that the vehicular access will be returned to a smaller entrance width following the completion of the proposed development (i.e. the house, gardens and associated landscaping). Further details relating to this element of the proposed development is included in the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP).

## 6. Planning Policy and Guidance

6.1. The site lies within the administrative boundary of Cherwell District Council. The development plan for the district comprises the following:

- Cherwell Local Plan (Part 1) (Adopted July 2015 (incorporating Policy Bicester 13 re-adopted on 19 December 2016))
- Cherwell Local Plan (Part 1) Partial Review - Oxford's Unmet Housing Need (Adopted September 2020)
- Saved Policies of the Cherwell Local Plan (Adopted November 1996)
- Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan (Made May 2019).

### **The Cherwell Local Plan 2011 – 2031 Part 1 (Adopted July 2015 and December 2016)**

6.2. The following policies of the adopted Local Plan 2031 Part 1 ('the Adopted Local Plan') are considered of most relevance:

- PSD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- BSC2: The Effective and Efficient Use of Land – Brownfield Land and Housing Density
- ESD1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change
- ESD2: Energy Hierarchy and Allowable Solutions
- ESD3: Sustainable Construction
- ESD4: Decentralised Energy Systems
- ESD5: Renewable Energy
- ESD6: Sustainable Flood Risk Management
- ESD10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment
- ESD13: Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement
- ESD15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment
- Villages1: Village Categorisation

### **Saved policies of the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan (Adopted November 1996)**

6.3. The following saved policies of the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 ('the Saved Local Plan') are considered of most relevance:

- H13: Residential development in category 1 settlements
- C1: Protection of sites of nature conservation value
- C23: Retention of features contributing to character or appearance of a conservation area
- C27: Development in villages to respect historic settlement pattern
- C28: Layout, design and external appearance of new development
- C30: Design of new residential development
- C31: Compatibility of proposals in residential areas

## **Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan (NP) – Made May 2019:**

6.4. The following policies of the Mid Cherwell NP are considered of most relevance:

- PD1: Development at Category A Villages
- PD4: Protection of Important Views And Vistas
- PD5: Building and Site Design
- PH5: Parking and Garaging Provision
- PH6: Parking Facilities for Existing Dwellings

## **Cherwell Residential Design Guide SPD**

6.5. Relevant policies of the Cherwell Residential Design Guide SPD will also be considered in determination of this application. This Design Guide was formally adopted on 16th July 2018, and formally sets out standards for new developments to meet through a series of checklists which each relate to key design principles.

6.6. Due reference has been made to the Cherwell Residential Design Guide SPD in the preparation of this planning application. In particular, consideration has been given by the Applicant in the design of the proposed development to the local design guidance relating to: Responding to the Site and its Context; Building Elevations and Details (including details relating to Sustainability considerations, Façade proportions, Building materials, and Detailed guidance on Windows, Roofs, Doors and porches, Decoration, and External boxes (for services)); and Innovation and Sustainability (i.e. in relation to Sustainable design and construction and Sustainable technology).

## **Steeple Aston Conservation Area Appraisal (SACAA) (April 2014)**

6.7. The SACAA was approved by the District Council in April 2014. Amongst the purposes of the SACAA is to create a clear context for future development in accordance with Conservation Area policies in the Local Plan. In designing the proposed development, the Applicant has taken into consideration the Design and Repair Guidance included in the SACAA and which relates to Scale, Proportion, Building Line, Roofs, External Walls, Rainwater goods and Windows.

## **National Planning Policy Framework**

6.8. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration. Of particular relevance is the policy guidance in Section 12 on achieving well-designed places and in Section 16 on conserving and enhancing the historic environment.



- 6.9. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on the 27th March 2012 and replaced the previous Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). On 24th July 2018, a revised NPPF was published which replaced the previous 2012 version. The NPPF was subsequently updated on 19th February 2019 to include an amended paragraph on the definition of deliverable housing. The requirements of the revised NPPF came into immediate effect for decision-making. The policy requirements of the NPPF are material to the consideration of applications for planning permission.
- 6.10. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets out the overarching objectives of the planning system in achieving sustainable development:
- an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
  - a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
  - an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

#### *Making effective use of land*

- 6.11. Chapter 11 of the NPPF deals with the effective use of land. It is made clear that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. This is reflected in the provisions of Paragraph 118 which states at criteria (d) that planning policies and decisions should “*Promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively*”.

#### *Achieving well-designed places*

- 6.12. Chapter 12 states the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve, noting that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development creating better places in which to live and work. Paragraph 128 is clear that design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals, with emphasis on early engagement with the local planning authority and local communities.

## *Conserving and enhancing the natural environment*

- 6.13. Chapter 15 (Paragraphs 170 – 177) addresses the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, noting that policies and decision-making should protect and enhance valued landscapes; recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity.

## *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*

- 6.14. Chapter 16 addresses the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and includes policies concerning proposals affecting heritage assets and the consideration of potential impacts of proposed development.
- 6.15. Paragraph 200 states that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset should be treated favourably.

## **Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)**

- 6.16. On 6 March 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government issued its Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) web-based resource. The PPG provides detailed guidance on the implementation of the NPPF and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. It has been updated to reflect the new NPPF in July 2018 and the application responds to the new advice and guidance.
- 6.17. Consideration has been given during the design process to the guidance which is provided in relation to: Design: Process and Tools; the Historic Environment (including in relation to designated heritage assets); the Natural Environment (including the undertaking of ecological surveys); Renewable and Low Carbon Energy; and Tree Preservation Orders and Trees in Conservation Areas.
- 6.18. As required by the PPG, in terms of the design of the proposed development, consideration has been given to the relevant characteristics of good design as outlined in the National Design Guide. Consideration has been given in the design of the proposed development to the relevant local design guide for Cherwell. In addition, and as also guided by the PPG, the Applicant has engaged with the District Council in obtaining pre-application advice on the draft development proposals.

## **Conclusion**

- 6.19. The proposed development has been designed by the Applicant to respond in a positive manner to the relevant national and local policies and guidance which seek to achieve a high quality of design. The proposed development also takes into consideration the strict requirements placed upon the design and location of new development within Conservation Areas and in close proximity to Listed Buildings.

## 7. Planning Assessment

7.1. This section of the Planning Statement provides an assessment of the proposed development against the development plan, the NPPF, and any relevant material considerations including planning history for the application site. Section 38 (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 to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.2. This Chapter addresses and responds to the key planning issues identified during pre-application discussions. This assessment focusses specifically on the following matters:

- Principle of Development
- Sustainable Development
- Impact on the Conservation Area
- Design
- Biodiversity and Nature Conservation
- Arboriculture and Landscaping
- Highways and Access
- Flood Risk and Drainage

### Principle of Development

7.3. Steeple Aston is categorised as a 'Category A' Service Village in Policy Villages 1 in the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011 – 2031 Part 1 (and in Policy PD1 of the NP). Policy H13 of the Saved Local Plan also classifies Steeple Aston as a Category 1 settlement. In these policies it is noted that proposals for minor development and infilling such as is proposed for Wincote will be considered suitable. The proposed development represents a minor form of development in the context of these policies.

7.4. In assessing whether proposals constitute acceptable 'minor development', Paragraph C.262 of the adopted Local Plan states that regard will be given to the following criteria:

- The size of the village and the level of service provision,
- The site's context with the existing built environment,
- Whether it is in keeping with the character and form of the village,
- Its local landscape setting, and
- The appropriate scale of development.

7.5. When considered against these criteria, it is considered that the proposed development represents a minor form of development, in a sustainable settlement and whose scale, design and materials are in keeping with its Conservation Area and landscape setting.

7.6. The proposed development also relates to the proposed demolition, replacement and enlargement of an existing home. The proposed development will enable Wincote to be rebuilt and extended to create a home with more suitable living and recreational space for the Applicant and his family. Accordingly, being an

existing residence, the principle of development in this location is already established.

- 7.7. In addition, the proposed development presents an opportunity to make better use of this parcel of land, in line with the NPPF and Local Plan policy, and to create a high quality and attractive built form that responds to the setting. In our opinion, Wincote, its modern extensions and those outbuildings which are all proposed to be replaced and the land immediately surrounding the existing house, which will be the subject of reorganisation (including new parking arrangement, gardens and landscaping), are relatively unprepossessing and do not contribute positively to the wider Conservation Area in its current form.
- 7.8. As such it is concluded that the development is acceptable in principle and accords with the relevant Local Plan and NP Policies as detailed above. In addition, it is noted that the pre-application advice provided by the District Council confirms that *“the broad principle of development is considered to be acceptable, with overall acceptability subject to other material considerations”*.
- 7.9. It is also noted that the application site comprises previously-developed land and the proposed new building will generally occupy that part of the site which currently has buildings on it. As a result, we consider that the proposed development also accords with Policy BSC2 of the Local Plan 2031 which seeks the effective and efficient use of land.

## Sustainable Development

- 7.10. Policy PSD1 of the Local Plan 2031 gives a presumption in favour of sustainable development where proposed development accords with the policies of the Local Plan (or other parts of the Development Plan) unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this regard, we consider that the proposed development accords with those relevant policies of the Local Plan (as identified below) and is, therefore, in accordance with Policy PSD1 as well.
- 7.11. In terms of the sustainability components of the proposed development, consideration has been given to Policies ESD1-5 of the Local Plan 2031. In this regard, the Design and Access Statement (DAS) accompanying this planning application identifies sustainable heating proposals for Wincote which will seek to reduce carbon emissions in accordance with Policy ESD1. The DAS also identifies that the proposed design, construction and use of materials of Wincote will follow the guidance included in these policies, where relevant.
- 7.12. In relation to the requirements of Policy ESD1, consideration has been given to design approaches which are resilient to climate change impacts, including the use of passive solar design. In the main living areas the Applicant is proposing larger windows to maximise the passive solar lighting to those spaces. The largest stretch of glazing is in the conservatory which connects the barn to the main house. To minimise solar gain the Applicant proposes to install a solar shading system in front of the glazing. Smaller windows to the sleeping areas mimic the dimensions of the windows in the retained cottage to prevent overheating. The ground floor structural slab will be concrete to provide thermal mass to the floor.
- 7.13. With regard to the specific requirements identified in Policy ESD3 relating to sustainable design and construction, we also note the following:
- To be as energy efficient as possible the Applicant proposes to use air source heat pumps as the

- primary heating system.
- Photovoltaic panels will be installed on the flat roof of the conservatory.
- Natural ventilation is proposed throughout the property.
- Locally sourced stone will be used to match the rest of the village and to reduce the carbon footprint of material delivery.
- The replacement house will largely follow the footprint of the existing buildings to maximise the use of established foundations (including retaining and building upon the existing cellar) and minimise the reduction of soft landscaping.
- The addition of a natural pond will enhance the surrounding environment.
- A shading system will be used on the large stretch of glazing of the conservatory.
- Materials gained from the demolition works will be used wherever possible in the new building, including as aggregates in groundworks. If suitable, the stone will be reused for the pool house.

## **Impact on Heritage Assets (Including the Steeple Aston Conservation Area and Listed Buildings)**

- 7.14. In determining this planning application, the District Council is required to afford due consideration to the preservation of Listed Buildings and their settings, and Conservation Areas. Relevant legislation is included in sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the “Act”).
- 7.15. Section 66(1) of the Act states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Section 72 also states that with respect to any buildings or other land in a Conservation Area special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.
- 7.16. In terms of local planning policy, Policy ESD 15 of the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 states that development in Conservation Areas should contribute positively to an area’s character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features. Policy C23 of the Saved Local Plan also relates to development within Conservation Areas and includes a presumption in favour of retaining buildings, walls, trees or other features which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area. Policy C27 states that development in villages will be expected to respect their historic settlement pattern.
- 7.17. Paragraph 200 of the NPPF also states that LPAs should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset should be treated favourably.
- 7.18. The site lies within the Steeple Aston Conservation Area and is located near to a number of listed buildings. As such, heritage conservation related policies are relevant to the determination of any planning application which is submitted in relation to this site.
- 7.19. Based on the current development proposals, we consider that the proposed layout and design of the new building and landscaping proposals will conserve and enhance the Conservation Area. The choice of materials and architectural styles will complement the design and layout of the existing residential properties and spaces in the vicinity of the site.

- 7.20. We also consider that the removal of the more recent additions to Wincote and their replacement with more sympathetically designed additions, including more contemporary elements, will result in an enhancement of the visual character of the immediate area. In addition, by locating the replacement house within the general location of the buildings to be demolished there will be no change to the historic settlement pattern along Cow Lane.
- 7.21. It is also noted that the location of the replacement house will not encroach into the settings of the closest listed buildings within Steeple Aston. The site frontage on Cow Lane will remain largely the same with the retention of the majority of trees. The proposed replacement dwelling will remain set back from the road so that the character of the street is retained.
- 7.22. Overall, we consider that the proposal will comprise high quality design that complements its setting, and will contribute positively to the wider character of the Conservation Area.
- 7.23. In addition, it is noted that the pre-application advice provided by the District Council confirms that *“On balance, given the siting, scale and design of the existing dwelling, it is considered that the development would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The existing dwelling has a large footprint and the proposed extensions would result in a visual improvement to the appearance of the dwelling. Furthermore, the dwelling is located away from other dwellings so would not be viewed in the immediate context of surrounding dwellings”*. The District Council also confirms that the proposed development would not affect the relationship between Wincote and the closest dwelling to the site (The Longbyre). Although the original cottage is now proposed for demolition, it is noted that the replacement dwelling will retain a very similar extent of separation between it and The Longbyre. It is also considered that the scale and design of the replacement for the original cottage represents an improvement in visual appearance.
- 7.24. With regard to other heritage related policies, we note that Policy PD4 of the Neighbourhood Plan concerns the protection of important views and vistas. Although we do not consider the site to be within an area with a protected skyline, we note that the site is in relatively close proximity to the listed Church of St Peter and St Paul. In this regard, we do not consider that the proposed development will significantly adversely affect the setting of the closest listed buildings.

## Design

### *High Quality Design*

- 7.25. Achieving high quality design represents a key objective of the proposed development and consideration has been given to those policies of the Development Plan and NPPF which concern this. In particular, we consider that the proposed development accords with the following policies:
- 7.26. Policies C28 and C30 of the Saved Local Plan state that the Council will exercise design control over new or extended housing development. In Conservation Areas, development will be required to be of a high standard and the use of traditional local building materials will normally be required. In addition, the Council will seek to ensure that new development is compatible with the appearance, character, layout, scale and density of existing dwellings and the street scene in the vicinity; and that standard of amenity and privacy

are acceptable. Policy PD5 of the NP also states that new development should be designed to a high standard which responds to the distinctive character of the settlement.

- 7.27. As described in greater detail in the Design and Access Statement, the applicant has taken into account relevant national and local design policies and guidance. In particular, the proposed design takes into consideration the local vernacular in the design and layout of the new building. This design process has also included the choice of sympathetic building materials to be used and the delivery of a sensitive landscaping scheme for the gardens and areas located around the property, the parking area and around the boundaries of the site. The DAS also considers the comparative scale between the existing and proposed developments.
- 7.28. Policy C31 of the Saved Local Plan also seeks to ensure that new residential development is compatible with the residential character of the area and would not cause an unacceptable level of nuisance or visual intrusion.
- 7.29. In this regard, it is considered that the design and location of the new building reflects existing local building styles. It is also noted that the new building will occupy the same general location as the existing property. In view of this, it is considered that the proposed development will be compatible with the character of the area. Although there will be an increase in the level of floorspace as part of the proposed development, the proposal is for a single family dwelling. As a result, we consider that there will not be an unacceptable level of nuisance created. In addition, we consider the location of the new building to be in an acceptable location which will not result in significant adverse visual intrusion of the closest located existing residential properties in the vicinity.

### *Car Parking / Bin Storage*

- 7.30. Policies PH5 and PH6 of the NP requires car parking to be made, where practical, in direct association with houses. Where garages are proposed they should be spacious enough to accommodate modern cars and bicycles. All dwellings should also have well-designed and adequate facilities for the storage of waste bins. In addition, applications which would reduce the existing level of off-street parking provision will be resisted.
- 7.31. In this regard, the proposed development includes provision for parking spaces at the arrival area towards the front of the 'new cottage'. The provision of this space will allow cars to be parked and delivery vehicles to turn around and exit. This will be a gravel area with light coloured limestone shingles as per the existing situation. The proposed arrangement is an improvement to the existing condition, where the driveway runs the full length of the property and is characterised by a steep slope, cutting the house off from the garden and presenting accessibility issues for both cars and people walking to the entrance of the property.
- 7.32. Provision will also be made for outside bin storage. This will be located close to the main entrance, so that the bins are accessible by refuse workers on collection days. To provide a more attractive entrance it is proposed to extend the existing stone boundary wall in front of the new vegetation and wrap around a small timber enclosure to store the wheelie bins. This will provide a nicer outlook for the neighbours compared to the existing situation and will ensure that the width of the public road is maximised.

### *Topography*

- 7.33. We also note that the initial design process has had due regard to topography and that a topographical survey will be submitted with the application. In addition, the application will also include a measured building survey and a construction and environmental management plan (CEMP).

*Addressing Pre-Application Comments by the Council*

- 7.34. Compared with the scheme which was submitted to the Council during the pre-application, the proposed development does not now include a bedroom at ground floor level. As a result, this change to the scheme further aligns the development proposals with the relevant planning policies relating to design.
- 7.35. Overall, we consider that the proposed development comprises a high quality design which accords with the relevant planning policies in the Development Plan relating to design, car parking, bin storage and topography.

### **Biodiversity and Nature Conservation**

- 7.36. Policy ESD10 of the Local Plan 2031 seeks the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and the natural environment. In doing so, the Council will seek a net gain in biodiversity by protecting, managing, enhancing and extending existing resources, and by creating new resources. Furthermore, development proposals will be expected to incorporate features to encourage biodiversity, and retain and where possible enhance existing features of nature conservation value within the site. Policy C1 of the Saved Local Plan adds that development which results in the loss of areas of designated wildlife importance will not normally be permitted.
- 7.37. This planning application is accompanied by an Ecological Appraisal Report. This report takes into consideration a desk-top study, Phase 1 Habitat Survey and the findings of surveys for Great Crest Newts and Bats. The ecological survey focussed upon the existing buildings which are found on site and on the land which is located within the application site boundary.
- 7.38. The desktop study confirms that the site is not subject to, nor adjacent to, any ecological designations. Therefore, no ecological designations will be adversely affected by the proposed works.
- 7.39. With respect to habitats, the application site is dominated by the existing dwelling, outbuildings and domestic gardens; none of which are important ecological features (albeit the dwelling supports bat roosts – see below). The only features of ecological importance are the hedgerows, which are a Priority Habitat; albeit only of local level value. The hedgerows are to be retained and subject to suitable safeguards.
- 7.40. Regarding protected species, based on the findings of the ecological surveys which have been undertaken it is concluded that:
- Great Crested Newts: Based on the surveying of two ponds in April and May 2021 within the zone of influence of the application site, it has been found that GCN are likely absent, with no evidence of this species recorded.
  - Bats: Based on the surveying of the existing buildings on site in April, May and June 2021, which will comprise part of the new home, it has been found that the existing main house supports hibernating Natterer's bats in the cellar and summer day roosting for Common and Soprano



Pipistrelle in external features of the roof.

- Other species: No evidence of any other protected species has been recorded at the site, however features such as the hedgerows and trees are likely to support nesting birds.

- 7.41. A suitable mitigation strategy will be implemented to safeguard roosting bats, which in summary will involve carrying out relevant works under a Natural England licence and provision of suitable replacement roosting opportunities. In addition, should it prove necessary to remove any bird nesting habitat this will be sensitively timed to minimise the risk to birds or subject to a nesting bird check by a suitably qualified ecologist. Implementation of such mitigation measures will ensure compliance with relevant legislation, e.g. Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).
- 7.42. In accordance with Policy ESD10, the proposals will incorporate features to encourage biodiversity, such as the provision of bat and bird boxes (above and beyond that required for mitigation/compensation) and enhancement of the existing defunct orchard through ecologically-directed management of the underlying grassland.
- 7.43. The Applicant is also proposing to create a natural swimming pond that has the potential to benefit the biodiversity of the proposal. Suitable native marginal species and aquatic plants could be included to the boundary of the pond and the permanent living water will provide opportunities for aquatic species along with water supply for mammals and birds. Further details on the potential benefits are outlined in the accompanying Ecological Appraisal.
- 7.44. In summary, subject to the implementation of proportionate avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures, no significant harm to biodiversity will result from the proposals, in accordance with the requirements of Policy ESD10. Furthermore, the proposed development incorporates features to encourage local wildlife, leading to net biodiversity gains.

## **Arboriculture and Landscaping**

- 7.45. Policy ESD10 of the Local Plan 2031 encourages the protection of trees. Policy ESD 13 sets out that opportunities to enhance the character and appearance of the landscape will be sought through the enhancement of existing landscapes and through the creation of new ones, for example the planting of trees. Development must respect and enhance the local landscape character and secure appropriate mitigation where damage to local character cannot be avoided. Policy ESD15 also requires that new development proposals should contribute positively to an area's character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features, including significant trees, in particular within Conservation Areas.
- 7.46. In this regard, it is noted that the applicant has sought retain existing trees where possible. Where it is proposed to remove trees, particularly at the site entrance to create the temporary construction access, the applicant proposes to either re-instate new trees at the main entrance or to provide new trees as part of the overall landscaping scheme.
- 7.47. This planning application is accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA), which include a Tree Constraints Plan, Tree Survey Schedule, Tree Protection Plan and Tree Survey Methodology.

7.48. Based on its findings, the AIA concludes that:

- The tree survey identified two high quality and three moderate quality trees within influence of the application area, all of which are retained and unaffected by the proposals.
- Tree removals which are required as part of the proposed development comprise low quality trees and shrubbery only, which can be readily mitigated for within subsequent garden improvement works.
- The removal of two low quality boundary Hawthorn and one Apple is required to enable construction access, all other removals are internally sited and of limited amenity contribution. The necessary boundary removals will be replaced following removal of the temporary construction access. Resultantly, the proposals' effect on the amenity of the surrounding Steeple Aston Conservation Area is particularly minor.

7.49. The retention of significant trees where possible is required by Adopted Local Plan Policy ESD15, which has been a key principle during design. The policy tests do not preclude the removal of trees to implement development, subject to appropriate replacement. The proposed renovation and extension works are subsequently not understood to conflict with Adopted Local Plan Policies ESD10, ESD13, ESD15, or NPPF paragraph 175c.

## Highways and Access

7.50. Policy ESD 1 of the Local Plan states that development must seek to reduce the need to travel and encourage sustainable transport options including walking, cycling, and public transport to reduce the dependence on private cars.

7.51. Whilst it is noted that the proposed development relates to demolition and replacement of an existing home, it is noted the property is within walkable distance of the existing facilities within Steeple Aston, reducing the need for car journeys in the local area.

7.52. In terms of access and parking, the proposed arrival area towards the front of the property will accommodate an area for parking which will be used by the applicant's family and visitors. The arrival area will also be designed to enable delivery vehicles can turn around and exit.

7.53. During the construction phase, a temporary construction access is proposed on Cow Lane in the location of the current site access. This proposed access and matters relating to the construction phase are addressed in a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) is submitted with the planning application. The purpose of the CTMP is to provide an overall strategy for managing traffic aspects and impacts throughout the construction period and provide details relating to traffic routing and provision of onsite facilities to minimise the impact on the local highway network. The CTMP includes a summary of existing legislation; an outline of the proposed construction access; an outline of the proposed site-specific measures; and an outline of the HGV routing strategy.

## *Flood Risk and Drainage*

- 7.54. The application site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is less than 1 hectare in size. The proposed development is, therefore, acceptable in light of Policy ESD6 of the Local Plan 2031. The application, therefore, does not require the submission of the Flood Risk Assessment or drainage proposals.

## 8. Conclusion

- 8.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Savills on behalf of Mr Henry Squire (the “Applicant”) in support of an application for planning permission and Conservation Area Consent for the demolition and replacement of an existing dwellinghouse at Steeple Aston, Oxfordshire. The proposed development comprises the replacement of the Applicant’s existing home with a larger property comprising single and two-storey elements, with associated access and landscaping.
- 8.2. This statement has assessed the proposed development against the development plans for Cherwell District Council, the NPPF, and relevant material considerations. The principle of providing a replacement of this family home in this location is considered acceptable when assessed against the relevant policy criteria and indeed it is already given that the proposed development relates to an existing home.
- 8.3. It is considered that proposed development has demonstrated that it complies with relevant local policies and the guidance of the NPPF, including in relation to access, heritage, ecology, design and general amenity matters. Therefore, as the proposal accords with an up-to-date development plan, represents a sustainable form of development and is appropriate in terms of its design and materials for the location in which it is proposed, it should be granted Full Planning Permission and Conservation Consent.

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