



CHARTERED TOWN PLANNERS

PLANNING, HERITAGE AND DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

MAWLES FARM, SIBFORD GOWER,
OXFORDSHIRE, OX15 5RR

**Construction of a timber framed building
within the existing pole barn for
ancillary use to the main dwelling**

September 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by JPPC to support the application for the provision of new ancillary accommodation within the existing pole barn building at Mawles Farm in Sibford Gower. The building would be used for garaging, storage and a home office and include the creation of a first floor.

1.2. The statement considers the planning context of the proposal including the prevailing planning policy and planning history and demonstrates it complies with the Development Plan and can be supported.

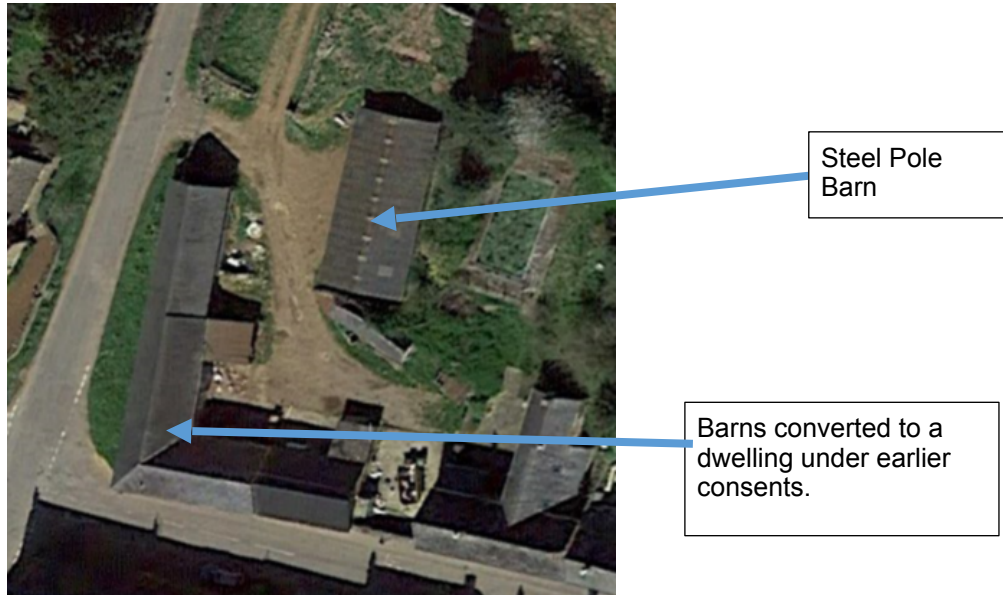
1.3. The application consists of this supporting statement and the submitted plans.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

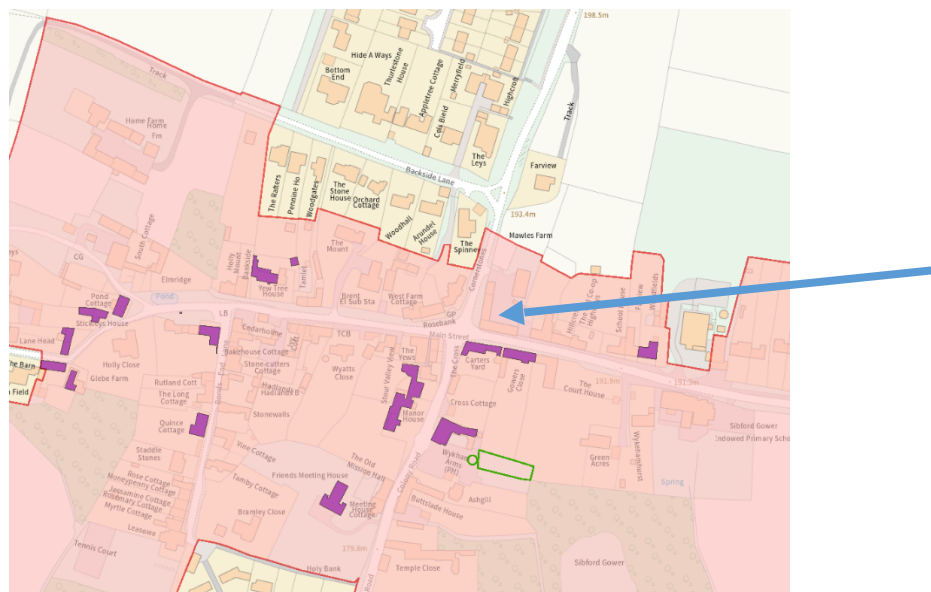
2.1. Mawles Farm is located on the central crossroads within Sibford Gower which is a village sited to the west of Banbury. Sibford Gower is part of group of settlements including Burdrop and Sibford Ferris. Main Street runs east to west and Pound Lane/Colony Lane runs north to south. The site is prominently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



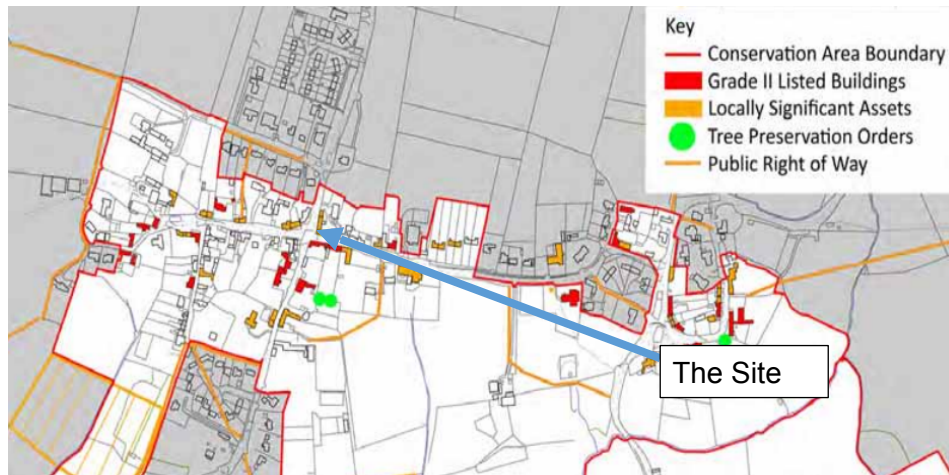
2.2. The site is a former redundant farm complex which has been sensitively altered and converted into a new dwelling in recent years. It consists of a number of stone barns to the southern and western boundaries and a modern pole barn to the eastern boundary, away from the road. The site sits adjacent to residential properties within the village and the land rises to the north and north east.



2.3. The site lies on the edge of the Sibford Gower with Burdrop conservation area as shown with the red shading on the below map. None of the buildings within the site are listed but a number of properties to the south of the site on the opposite side of Main Road are listed as shown purple on the below map.



2.4. The Sibford Ferris, Sibford Gower and Burdrop Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) produced by the Council identifies the stone barn range within the site as buildings of local significance as shown on the plan below. These have been subject to a sensitive conversion to a dwelling.



2.5. The CAA also 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 villages. 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 a reminder of the agricultural origins of the village.

2.6. 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.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

3.1. The relevant planning history of the site is as follows (taken from the Council's online records).

3.2. The existing modern barn on the site was permitted under 96/00904/F which allowed permission for a replacement outbuilding for housing of livestock and storage.

3.3. In 2020 planning permission was refused (19/02700/F refers) for the conversion of the existing stone/brick barns to 1no dwelling and the conversion of existing

steel pole barn to a separate dwelling. This 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.

- 3.4. Later in 2020, planning permission was granted (20/02545/F) for the conversion of the existing barns to create 1 new dwelling, the demolition of the existing steel barn and the erection of replacement ancillary outbuilding and associated works. This showed the pole barn, subject to this application, demolished and replaced with a stone building with pitched roof accommodating ancillary accommodation and garaging at ground floor with an ancillary/storage space in the roof area. Conditions 17 and 18 removed a number of permitted development rights from the site.
- 3.5. In 2021 planning permission was granted for some minor alterations to the 2020 consent under planning approval 21/02409/F. Once again certain permitted development rights were removed under conditions 16 and 17 including extensions and new outbuildings.

4. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1. Further to the redevelopment of the historic barns on the site to a high quality dwelling the applicant has been considering the options of the ancillary outbuildings on the site.
- 4.2. The applicant wishes to utilise the existing building on the site rather than demolish it and is proposing a contemporary scheme to ensure the agricultural character and appearance of the site is retained, which is a positive element of the conservation areas' character as identified in the CAA.
- 4.3. The current application seeks planning permission to retain the existing pole barn on the site and erect a new timber framed building inside it which would be used for ancillary accommodation to the main dwelling. The timber building would sit wholly within the existing steel framed building and would appear as a conversion for within and outside of the site. The building would be faced of burnt/charcoal larch and would have steel windows to match the main house. It has been designed with a simple palette of materials and simple detailing to match the agrarian character of the existing buildings and setting.
- 4.4. The building would provide garaging for parking for the existing dwelling and a workshop at ground floor level. The first floor would provide a home office, storage and ancillary accommodation.

5. PLANNING POLICY AND OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1. Planning law (Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, including any local and neighbourhood plans that have been brought into force, unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise.

5.2. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

National Planning Policy Framework

5.3. The National Planning Policy Framework (“the NPPF”) was revised in September 2023. It has, at its heart, a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 11 confirms that for decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date 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:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed (the relevant policies are listed in a footnote in the NPPF); or
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

5.4. Paragraph 38 states that local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Paragraph 47 confirms that decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing.

- 5.5. Section 12 of the NPPF deals with design and confirms that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Paragraph 130 states decisions should ensure development add to the overall quality of an area, be sympathetic to local character whilst not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation and be visually attractive as a result of good architecture. Paragraph 134 states that significant weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability or helps raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.
3. Chapter 14 states in meeting the challenges of climate change the planning system should encourage the re-use of existing resources, such as the conversion of existing buildings.
 4. Chapter 15 states that planning decisions should protect and enhance biodiversity and seek to pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains in biodiversity.
 5. Chapter 16 concerns heritage assets and states that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Paragraph 197 states in determining applications account should be taken of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. Paragraph 199 states that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 2011-2031 (CLP 2015)

6. The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 was adopted in July 2015. Applicable policies are considered to be as follows:

BSC2 – The Effective and Efficient Use of Land -Brownfield land and Housing Density

ESD1 – Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change

ESD10 – Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment

ESD15 – The Character of the Built and Historic Environment

Cherwell Local Plan 1996 (CLP 1996)

7. The 1996 Local Plan was adopted in 1996. A number of the policies in the local plan are considered to be 'saved'. Applicable policies are considered to be as follows:

H21 – Conversion of building within settlements

C23 – Presumption in favour of retaining positive buildings in Conservation Areas

C28 – Design of new residential development

C30 – Design control

8. The Conservation Area Appraisal is also a relevant material consideration.

6. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

1. The current application seeks to utilise the existing steel framed building located to the rear of the new dwelling to provide ancillary accommodation. This would be instead of the original plan to demolish the building and replace it with a new building for ancillary accommodation which was permitted under planning approval 21/02409/F
2. The earlier applications granted consent for the whole of the site to be used for residential purposes and therefore the existing steel framed building has obtained lawful ancillary residential use under those permissions. There were no planning conditions which required the removal of this building and the parking provision for the site can be provided with this existing barn remaining in situ. If the Council had wished to require the removal of the existing building as part of the earlier conversion scheme a planning condition would have been required to be placed on the consent requiring such removal. The existing building and surrounding land has therefore clearly assumed a lawful residential use through the earlier consents. The applicant could therefore retain the existing steel framed barn on the site in its present condition to provide a covered area for storage and car parking. This is material to the consideration of the current application.
3. None of the buildings within the site are on the listed buildings register, however the barns on the southern and western boundaries of the site, which have been converted to a dwelling are identified by the Council as non-designated heritage assets within the Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA). The pole barn which is subject to this application is not directly identified as part of these and is also not identified to be harmful to the conservation area.

4. The site is identified to lie within the Sibford Gower character area within the CAA which goes onto outline that traditionally Sibford Gower was a large farming community, however over recent years the majority of the farms have been converted into dwellings. It notes that one exception to this at the time of writing the CAA was Mawles Farm (i.e. the site) and further notes that Mawles Farm is an indication that the village has not been gentrified but retains reminders of its agricultural origins – this comment being made in recognition of both the traditional and modern farm buildings on the site.
5. Furthermore the CAA goes onto note that farm activities and land adjacent to the village are important visually and also assists in anchoring the village to its agricultural roots. This includes the land to the north of Mawles Farm which is seen to be important as it provides a view from the heart of the village retaining the agricultural character and also provides an appropriate setting to the farm group. The CAA also notes that Mawles Farm was (at the time of writing) a working farm at the heart of the village and the loss of this activity and alterations to the building could harmfully alter the character of the village presumably through the loss of the agricultural character of the site.
6. We therefore consider that the agricultural origins, buildings and activities within the village are a key positive element of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and it is important that new development responds to this appropriately.
7. The loss of the application site to residential development has already been accepted and a number of schemes has been approved on the site to provide a long term viable use to the historic former agricultural buildings in a sensitive and attractive manner. The previously approved scheme sought permission to demolish the existing steel framed agricultural building and replace it with a historical pastiche with pitched roof and stone walls of a similar overall height to the existing steel framed barn.
8. The current application offers a different, and equally acceptable scheme in our view. As noted above is it important that the agricultural character and appearance of the site is not lost and wholly sanitised as this would be harmful. The steel framed building, whilst not being the most architecturally or historically significant building, does positively contribute to the agrarian character and appearance of the site/area and the agricultural activities and history of the village. It points to the activity of a recent working farm which has been adapted over the years to sustain its existence at the heart of the village and references a chapter in the history of the village with its form, siting and appearance.

9. It is important to note that it is an existing building which benefits from planning permission and was deemed acceptable at that time. It could be retained on the site in its current form. The current application would not increase the height or scale of the building and would work wholly within the volume and space occupied by the existing building. The design has been sensitively considered to retain the agricultural and functional character and appearance of the existing building to ensure it is not harmful to the surrounding heritage assets as outlined in detail below.
10. The proposals for the alterations to the building have been designed to have a simple design and palette of materials with the use of timber cladding on the elevations of the building which is wholly in keeping with the agricultural origins and character of the building and as used elsewhere on the site. Timber cladding is a common element of agricultural buildings in the district and retains a subservience to the ironstone which is used on principal buildings in the village.
11. The fenestration has been kept simple, crisp and functional and will reflect the existing functional character of the building and the angles which characterise the building with the steel frame. It would be a contemporary yet considered approach which builds on and is sensitive to the agricultural and function character of the building.
12. The west elevation of the building, which would be the most visible in the surroundings, has been designed to be set back approximately 1.5 metres from the front of the existing steel framed building meaning it is set behind the steel posts of the existing building. This helps to create a sense of subservience to the existing steel framed building and provides a clear distinction between the former functional use of the building and the new ancillary use. This design solution also helps to reduce the perception of any significant increase in visual bulk or massing of the building which may be perceived as arising from the proposal as the new structure is set within the existing building.
13. In terms of visual impacts, views of the building from the south of the site on Main Street are largely obscured by existing buildings and structures given the set back position of the building in the plot from the road. Where limited views are available as outlined above the design is sensitively considered in the context of the existing building and surroundings.

14. The existing building is partially subterranean with the land to the north and east being on higher land. There would be no alteration to the appearance of the building from the eastern elevation.
15. The main views of the building from within the conservation area would be from the west of the site from Pound Lane. Many of the views of the building from Pound Lane are however obscured by the existing recently converted buildings to the frontage of the site and from the rising land and roadside vegetation to the west of Pound Lane. Some limited views are available around the access to the site however the visual presence of the building is somewhat muted by the fact that the northern and eastern elevations of the building are built into the ground. Where views are available the proposed development would not increase the scale, bulk or visual prominence of the building given the sensitive design of the proposal.
16. The fact that the western and southern elements of the proposed building are set in some distance from the existing steel columns of the building will reduce the visual presence of the building and ensure the overall bulk of the building is not significantly increased. It would be viewed as a sensitively adapted agricultural building with simple detailing in appropriate materials. It would not only provide a high quality contemporary design response but also retain the agricultural character and origins of the site and the village which is part of the significance of the Conservation Area and would not overly sanitise or eliminate the sites recent working history.
17. The proposal would therefore in our opinion not lead to any harm to the significance of the Conservation Area and would preserve both the character and appearance of the conservation area.
18. In respect of the setting of the listed buildings there is very limited intervisibility between the building subject to this application and the nearby listed buildings with the intervening buildings and structures largely obscuring views. Furthermore it must be remembered that the steel framed building is an existing building which is already an element of the setting of the listed buildings. The set back position of the existing barn from the southern and eastern boundaries of the site means that the building is neither prominent or a significant element of any contextual views with these proposals in our opinion. Therefore we consider the impact on the setting of the nearby listed building to be neutral.
19. Whilst it is noted that an earlier scheme for a new dwelling based on the steel barn was refused by the Council, the current scheme is materially different to this

and has altered the design of the proposal to respond to the concerns including setting the elevations of proposals behind the steel frame as outlined above and providing a different design solution. Furthermore the proposal is now for ancillary accommodation rather than a new dwelling and the ancillary nature of the building means there is no need to subdivide the existing site as the buildings are to be retained as a single planning unit.

20. In conclusion on matters of heritage and character and appearance we consider that the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and also the setting of the nearby listed buildings. There would be no harm to the significance of the heritage assets which might be impacted by the proposal and there is therefore no need to undertake the heritage balance as outlined in paragraph 202 of the NPPF. Furthermore the statutory duties under Section 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 are met. We therefore consider the development complies with the relevant policies of the Development Plan including Policy ESD15 of the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 2015, Saved Policy C28 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996, and advice in the NPPF.

Residential amenity

21. Policy ESD15 states that all development should consider the amenity of both existing and future development, including matters of privacy, outlook, natural lighting, ventilation, and indoor and outdoor space.
22. The proposed development will be used for ancillary residential accommodation which is considered to be wholly compatible with the surrounding residential development.
23. The proposal would include a number of windows facing west towards the recent barn conversion however as the development is for ancillary accommodation to this dwelling there is not considered to be any harmful impacts.
24. The windows serving the first floor northern accommodation would face onto the elevated garden area serving the existing dwelling and would not result in any significant overlooking to the neighbouring properties. The eastern elevation, facing into the garden of Mawles Farm, would remain unaltered as part of the proposal and it is noted the garden on Mawles farm is on higher land also at this point.
25. The southern elevation of the building would include a new glazed opening and also the provision of a first floor balcony area. This would be set in from the

southern elevation of the building as shown on the submitted plans. Given the location of the building views from the proposed opening and balcony would be directed back towards the area serving the recent barn conversion. Views towards Mawles Farmhouse are likely to be very limited due to the off-set relationship of the proposed building to this property, the fact that the balcony and window openings are inset some distance from the existing southern elevation of the building and the fact that the cladding to the eastern elevation of the building is to be retained and will obscure views in an easterly direction. Therefore there is not considered to be any significant level of overlooking or loss of privacy from the proposals.

26. The proposals are considered to be a sufficient distance (approx. 30m) from the properties to the south of Main Street to ensure there is not significant impacts on their amenity having regard to the scale and nature of the proposal.
27. Overall we therefore consider the proposal would comply with the relevant Development Plan policies in this respect.

Access and parking

28. The access serving the site would not be impacted by the proposal which would continue to be from Pound Lane. There is adequate space to accommodate vehicles associated with the dwelling within the hard standing on the site which is part of the approved layout.
29. Whilst the current proposal no longer proposes to provide the car ports and ancillary accommodation building, which formed an element of the earlier approval, the ground floor of the proposed building will mainly be laid over to garaging for vehicle parking as shown on the submitted plans so will be available for use by the occupants of the site. Overall the proposal would therefore provide more than adequate parking to serve the existing dwelling on the site.

Ecology

30. The earlier applications on the site were subject to ecological appraisals and did not identify any ecological value relating to the existing pole barn. The existing structure will be retained and the only land disturbed by the proposal would be the hard standing under the cover of the building which is of no ecological value.

31. Therefore the proposed development would not have any impact on ecological constraints and is considered to comply with the advice in the Cherwell Local Plan 2015 and in Framework.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1. This statement has examined the planning background of the site, the context of the site and the surrounding area and the relevant national and local planning policy framework in respect of the proposed ancillary building at Mawles Farm.
- 6.2. The building is for incidental and ancillary residential accommodation and is in the location of a previously permitted outbuilding which provided accommodation over two floors. Furthermore the existing steel framed building could be retained on site and would have very similar visual impacts to the proposal.
- 6.3. The existing steel framed building which the proposal would be accommodated within is already in situ and the visual impacts of it are therefore already a component of the existing built environment. The proposal has been sensitively designed and detailed to respect the agricultural character of the existing barn and ensures the proposal does not increase the visual bulk or massing of the building. The proposal would retain the agrarian character of the site which is an important element to the Conservation Area and would serve as a reminder that agricultural activities still occurred in the village within the late and early 21st century.
- 6.4. The proposal would not significantly impact on the amenity of the neighbouring properties and would not impact on the ecological constraints which impact on the wider site. Parking would be provided in the form of garages within the ground floor of the building and also on the approved hardstanding to the front of the building.
- 6.5. The proposals are therefore considered to be a sustainable form of development in accordance with the Cherwell Local Plan 2031, the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 and the NPPF.
- 6.6. In light of the above, we respectfully request on behalf of our client that the Council approves the proposal.