

W A Adams Partnership

Glebe Farm (forming part of Springfield House Farm) Boddington Road, Claydon, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX17 1TD

Planning Statement

**Proposed Inland Waterways Marina with Ancillary Facilities Building, Car Parking,
Access and Associated Landscaping including the Construction of a New Lake**

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May 2018



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by SBRice Limited on behalf of the Applicants, W A Adams Partnership and is submitted to accompany an application in full for the construction of a new marina adjacent to the Oxford Canal providing 250 berths, facilities building, yard area for boat maintenance and repair, new highways access, associated infrastructure such as car parking, cycle storage, footpaths, access roads and landscaping which includes the creation of a new lake.
- 1.2 The application site (Glebe Farm) forms part of Springfield House Farm (hereinafter referred to as Glebe Farm) and is located on agricultural land immediately to the north of the Oxford Canal.
- 1.3 The application is in full and is accompanied by
- Planning Statement
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
 - Heritage Assessment
 - Ecological Assessment
 - Agricultural Land Classification Assessment
 - Transport Assessment
 - Flood Risk Assessment
 - Sequential Test
 - Arboricultural Assessment
 - Scaled plans and drawings
- 1.4 The Planning Statement assesses the proposed development in the context of its compliance with national and local planning policies.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND LOCALITY

- 2.1 The proposed site (Glebe Farm) is located on agricultural land forming part of Springfield House Farm immediately to the north of the Oxford Canal and east of the Boddington Road.
- 2.2 Glebe Farm forms part of a larger mixed-use farming operation totaling approximately 580 Ha of grass and arable land farmed by the Applicants (W A Adams Partnership).
- 2.3 The site sits slightly lower than the Oxford Canal and is currently in arable production. It is bordered to the north by mature vegetation running alongside redundant railway line. Access to the highway will be taken from the Boddington Road which borders the site on the west and north west.
- 2.4 The marina basin will be linked to the Oxford Canal by way of a new entrance from the marina onto the canal.
- 2.5 The site is not located within the Green Belt or any other statutory land based designation.
- 2.6 A location plan at a scale of 1:1250 (drawing reference A05/005D) can be found included as **Appendix A**. An overview of the site in its surrounding geographical context can be seen in Figure 2.6 below.

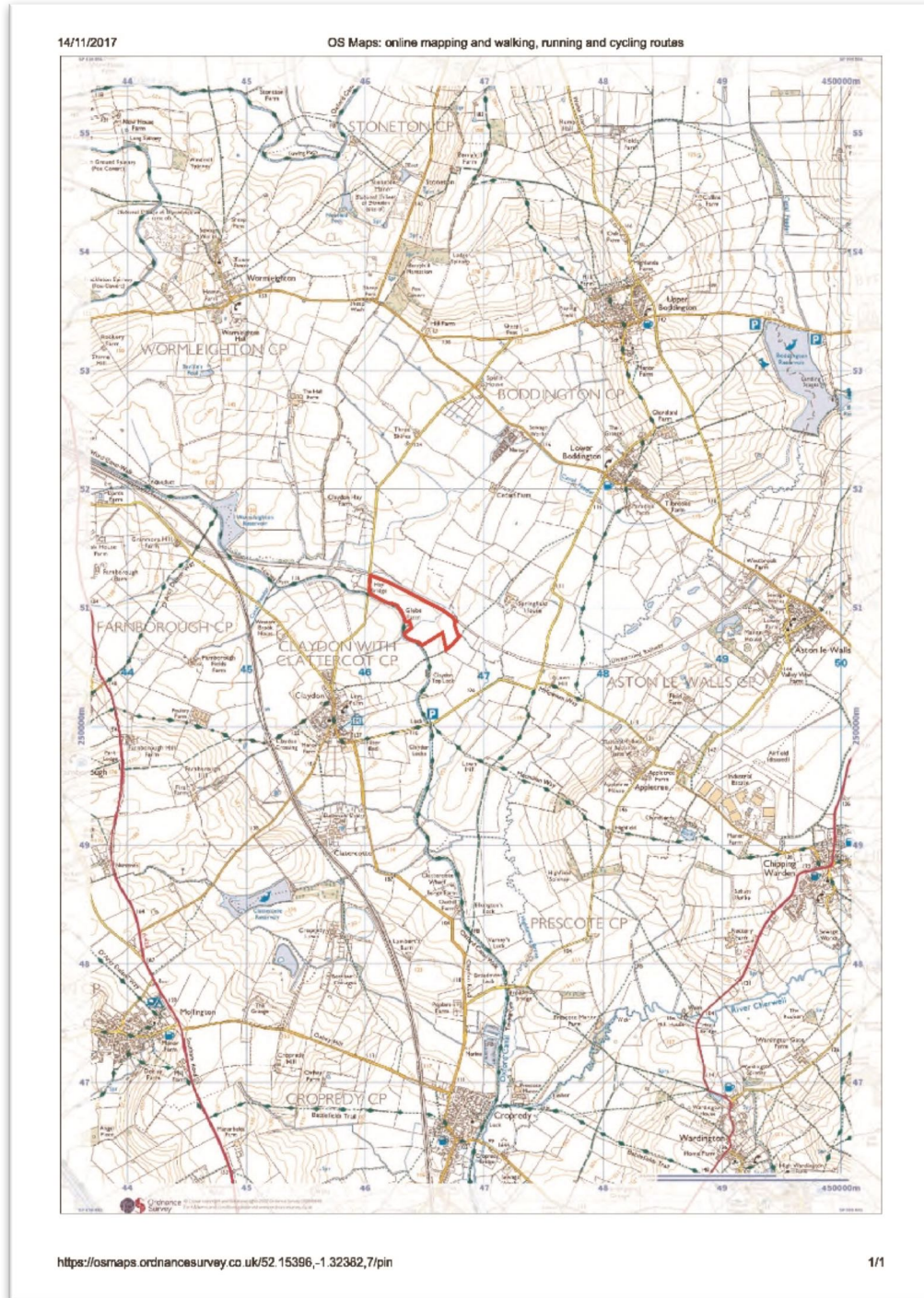


Fig 2.6.

2.7 There is an existing residential dwelling within the ownership of the Applicants located on the



southern boundary immediately adjacent to the Oxford Canal. The closest third-party properties are located at Haybridge Meadow; an equestrian property approximately 110m to the east on the far side of the Boddington Road and Claydon Hay Farm the closest residential property lying approximately 530m to the north.

2.8 The village of Claydon lies approximately 640m to the south west as the crow flies. A walk of approximately 1000m using existing public rights of way enables users of the site to gain access on foot directly to the village.

2.9 The site is located partially within and immediately adjacent to the Oxford Canal Conservation Area.

3.0 **PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

3.1 The site area is 17.79 Ha with the marina basin totaling 4.00 Ha, with a maximum depth of 1.6m. The new lake totals 2.16 Ha.

3.2 The basin provides mooring for 250 boats, for recreational purposes only. The marina basin is designed to replicate the form of a natural lake with all berths located at 90 degrees to the bank. They are in groups of no more than 16 boats separated by spits of land that jut out into the basin to provide some visual screening, wind protection and opportunities for ecological enhancement. There will also be a large island connected to the southern bank by a further spit of land that has been designed to provide visual enhancement and additional landscape screening along with significant potential for ecological enhancement.

3.3 The boats will be moored to jetties that are permanently fixed to the bed of the marina via steel piles and to the walkway that encircles the perimeter of the basin.

3.4 Each berth will be provided with water and electricity and a number of the berths will be constructed to facilitate disabled access.

3.5 The berths have been designed to cater for boats up to 21 metres in length, although the most common length of narrow boat on the Oxford Canal is 18 metres and it is anticipated that over 80% of the boats frequenting the marina will be of this length.

- 3.6 The berths will be solely for recreational purposes, none of the moorings will be residential. There will be no permanent residential moorings for management staff as this accommodation will be provided in the facilities building.
- 3.7 In addition to the marina basin and its moorings there is a requirement for infrastructure associated with the operation of a successful marina. This includes the following:
- Facilities building
 - Car parking
 - Access roads including highways access
 - Footpaths and walkways
 - Towpath bridge
 - Cycle store and cycle track to the highway
 - Yard area with lift out, maintenance and service bays within the marina basin
 - Lake, following extraction of material used to construct the embankment surrounding the basin. The lake will be used as an irrigation reservoir and to provide further ecological enhancement.
- 3.8 The proposed layout of the development is detailed on drawing reference A05/010G found in **Appendix K**.
- 3.9 The parking is distributed around the site with the largest car park located immediately to the north of the facilities building providing parking for 52 visitors cars with a further 8 car parking bays allocated for staff. There are a further 142 car parking spaces located in parking areas distributed around the perimeter access road that extends around the east and southern perimeter of the basin.
- 3.10 A total of 20 cycle spaces will be provided in close proximity to the facilities building.

- 3.11 The facilities building is located to the north east of the basin and is positioned to be directly opposite from the marina entrance from the canal.
- 3.12 The building is designed to replicate a traditional U shaped agricultural barn which has been converted to an alternative use. The part two storey, part single storey building with a gross external floor area of 329.2m² would provide the following facilities:
- Male and female toilets and showers including disabled facilities for both
 - Elsan disposal point
 - Laundry
 - Offices for the marina
 - Reception area and chandlery
 - Facilities for the moorers including a lounge, clubhouse and seating areas
 - Plant room
 - Two bedroomed marina manager's accommodation
- 3.13 The building will be constructed out of a traditional red brick that is common to the locality under a natural slate roof.
- 3.14 Windows, doors and external joinery features will be constructed out of timber and either stained or painted to retain the appearance of natural timber.
- 3.15 The car parking and access roads will be constructed out of permeable material such as crushed limestone. The car parking areas that will be subject to more vehicle movements will be surfaced in permeable tarmac.
- 3.16 A secure storage area for cycles will also be provided to provide secure undercover storage for marina user's bikes.
- 3.17 The development includes a number of ecological enhancements that are incorporated into the

overall landscaping scheme, further details are provided in section 7.55 of this report.

3.18 Foul water will be dealt with via the installation of a package treatment plant. This will be installed immediately adjacent to the facilities building, the overflow will drain into the existing watercourse to the east of the site.

3.19 The type of package treatment plant to be installed will be similar to the equipment detailed in **Appendix Z**. The location of the treatment plant and the watercourse into which the overflow will be discharged is as detailed on drawing SK07-RevD (FRA Appendix J) attached within the FRA. (**Appendix Gb2**).

4.0 SCREENING

4.1 Environmental Impact Assessment – Screening Opinion

4.2 Prior to the preparation of the planning application, the Applicants requested a screening opinion for Environmental Impact Assessment from the Local Planning Authority.

4.3 The Local Planning Authority, by way of correspondence dated 24 October 2016, confirmed that following a formal screening assessment that has taken into account the criteria in Schedule 3 to the EIA Regulations and the guidance in the Planning Practice Guidance, it is considered that the proposed development is unlikely to have significant effects on the environment and does not therefore require the submission of an Environmental Statement. A copy of the screening response is included as **Appendix E**.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

5.1 The proposed development should be considered in the context of its compliance with national and local planning policies.

5.2 The following plans and their policies are relevant to this application.

5.3 National Policy

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) March 2012 specifically

- Section 3 – Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy – paragraph 28
- Section 8 – Promoting Healthy Communities – paragraph 73
- Section 11 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment – paragraphs 109 and 118
- Section 12 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment – paragraphs 128, 129, 131, 132 and 134

5.4 Local Planning Policies

- Cherwell Local Plan 1996 Saved Policies (CLP1996) specifically
 - R7 – Protection and Enhancement of the Recreational Roles of the Oxford Canal and River Cherwell
 - R9 – Facilities for Canal Users
 - TR5 – Provision for Vehicles in the Development
 - TR7 – Vehicular Traffic on Minor Roads
 - TR11 – Oxford Canal – Future Use of the Canal
 - C2 – Protected Species
 - C5 – Protection of Ecological Value and Rural Character of the Oxford Canal.
 - C7 – Landscape Conservation
 - C23 – Retention of Features Contributing to the Character and Appearance of a Conservation Area
 - C28 – Layout, Design and External Appearance of New Development
 - C29 – Appearance of Development Adjacent to the Oxford Canal
 - ENV1 – Development Likely to Cause Detrimental Levels of Pollution

- ENV7 – Development Affecting Water Quality
- Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 (CLP2031 Part 1) specifically
 - SLE1 – Employment Development
 - SLE3 – Supporting Tourism Growth
 - ESD3 – Sustainable Construction
 - ESD6 – Sustainable Flood Risk Management
 - ESD8 – Water Resources
 - 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
 - ESD16 – The Oxford Canal

6.0 KEY ISSUES

6.1 There are a number of sound reasons why the Applicants propose to create a new marina at Glebe Farm. These include;

- The marina will provide a valuable recreational resource on the Oxford Canal through the creation of 250 purpose built moorings for recreational boating. The Oxford Canal is one of the most popular canals for tourism and boating and the proposal will create more facilities and choice for boaters wishing to visit the region and cruise the canal. This area of Oxfordshire will be badly affected by HS2 which is likely to have a negative impact on tourism and recreation. A positive development such as the marina will help to offset the negative impact caused by the railway.
- The Applicants farming operation will be severely impacted by HS2. The railway will bisect the farm making it more difficult and costly to operate. Approximately 130 acres of land will be lost during the construction phase, it is unclear how much of this land may be

returned to the applicants. This temporary and permanent loss of land will have a significant adverse impact on the financial viability of the farm.

- Brexit is likely to have a significant impact on farming businesses reliant on production subsidies received from the EU for combinable crops.
- The Applicants need to diversify into non-agricultural businesses in order to replace the income that will be lost to the HS2 development.
- The Applicants need to move from reliance on subsidised combinable crops to produce crops that do not require subsidy such as potatoes and other high value root crops. These crops require irrigation to be commercially viable.
- The marina and irrigation reservoir will provide the Applicants with solutions to the both issues identified above.

6.2 The Applicants have taken an iterative approach to the design of the proposed development, in doing so they have carefully considered the potential impact of the proposal on

- The landscape
- Ecology and biodiversity
- Heritage assets
- Loss of agricultural land
- Transport and the highways network
- Flood risk

6.3 The key issues in terms of an assessment of compliance with planning policy are

- The principle of development
- Impact on heritage assets
- Landscape and visual impact
- Ecological impact

- Flood risk
- Transport – highways and parking
- Residential amenity
- Trees and landscaping
- Agricultural land

7.0 **PLANNING APPRAISAL**

7.1 **Principle of Development**

7.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) confirms that at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. When considering a proposal, Local Planning Authorities should approve development proposals that accord with the development plan or where the plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, grant permission unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

7.3 Section 3 of the Framework confirms that policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity. This includes support for sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that will benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors where those developments respect the character of the countryside.

7.4 It also states that policies should promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses.

7.5 Section 8 of the Framework confirms that policies should be capable of assessing the need for recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision and that where these needs are identified, policies should support the provision of such facilities.

7.6 The saved policies of the CLP1996 include policies that relate to the recreational use of the Oxford Canal and River Cherwell. These include policies R7, R9 and TR11. The adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (CLP2031 Part 1) also includes a policy relating to the Oxford Canal in the form of

policy ESD16.

- 7.7 The criteria identified in policies R7, R9 and TR11 in the CLP1996 are largely reflected in policy ESD 16 in the CLP2031 Part 1.
- 7.8 The policies confirm that the Council will, through the control of development, seek to protect and enhance the recreational role fulfilled by the Oxford Canal. Policy R7 requires that, through the control of development, the Council will seek to protect and enhance the recreation roles of the Oxford Canal and River Cherwell. Policy ESD16 requires the Council to protect and enhance the Oxford Canal Corridor as a tourist attraction and major leisure facility, whilst recognizing that it is a designated Conservation Area and that proposals which would be detrimental to its character or appearance will not be permitted. The Council will support proposals to promote recreation, leisure and tourism related uses of the canal, where appropriate, whilst ensuring that the biodiversity value of the canal corridor will be protected and that the towpath alongside the canal remains and becomes accessible for all users.
- 7.9 The proposal would create 250 offline visitor/recreational moorings which would be available to users of the canal and the development therefore would enhance the recreational role required by both policies.
- 7.10 Both policies R9 and ESD16 confirm that other than appropriately located small scale car parks or picnic facilities, new facilities for canal users would normally, or should be, located within or immediately adjacent to settlements.
- 7.11 The proposed marina is located approximately 640m as the crow flies to the north east of the village of Claydon or approximately 1000m on foot if using the existing public rights of way.
- 7.12 As the marina would be separated from the built-up limits of the village by existing agricultural fields, it is unlikely to be considered either within or adjacent to the settlement.
- 7.13 However, in order to comply with planning requirements a sequential test has been carried out to assess potential alternative sites for a marina on the Oxford Canal within the Cherwell district in the context of its location within Flood Zone 2 or 3.

- 7.14 Whilst carrying out the sequential test we have considered all other potential alternative sites for a marina alongside the Oxford Canal within the Cherwell district.
- 7.15 Please refer to the sequential test report in **Appendix Ra** with the accompanying plan in **Appendix Rb**.
- 7.16 A total of 14 alternative sites were assessed in order to determine whether the proposed site at Glebe Farm passed the sequential test for flood risk. Although proximity to an existing settlement was not considered a relevant criterion when carrying out the sequential test for flood risk, this criterion was assessed in order to determine whether any of the 14 alternative sites complied with policy ESD16.
- 7.17 Of the 14 sites considered only site 12 is considered potentially suitable for a marina and is located reasonably close to an existing settlement. Whilst it is currently not located any closer than the proposed marina is to the village of Claydon, an extant planning permission for residential development on the outskirts of Banbury will result in the built environment extending up to the area identified as site 12.
- 7.18 However, the land rises steeply from the canal and construction of the marina basin would therefore require significant excavation which is likely to render the proposal economically unviable.
- 7.19 Our assessment therefore of potential alternative sites for a marina connected to the Oxford Canal within the Cherwell district confirms that only one of the potential sites would comply with the requirements of policy ESD16. This location is unlikely to be commercially viable due to the topography of the land.
- 7.20 Most of the sites assessed were considerably further from existing settlements than the proposed marina at Glebe Farm.
- 7.21 It would appear therefore, that compliance with this criteria in policy ESD16 would be very difficult to achieve when other criteria such as flood risk, proximity to ecologically sensitive areas, heritage assets and commercial viability are taken into account.

- 7.22 It is assumed that the intention of policy ESD16 is to ensure that developments are sustainable and that users do not need to solely rely on the motor vehicle for access.
- 7.23 The Transport Assessment submitted with the application, found in **Appendix O**, confirms that the development would not generate sufficient vehicle movements to have an adverse impact on the local highways network.
- 7.24 Travel data confirms that most users of a marina will drive to the marina and then leave their car whilst they cruise the network on their boat. Furthermore, a considerable number of boat owners also own dogs and therefore are more likely to walk to nearest settlements rather than use their car.
- 7.25 Users of the marina can gain access to Claydon village using existing public rights of way. The figure below demonstrates the ease with which users of the marina can access the village by walking a short distance up the towpath to access public footpath 170/6/20 which crosses the canal at Claydon Top Lock Bridge No 144 and passes from there directly into the village.

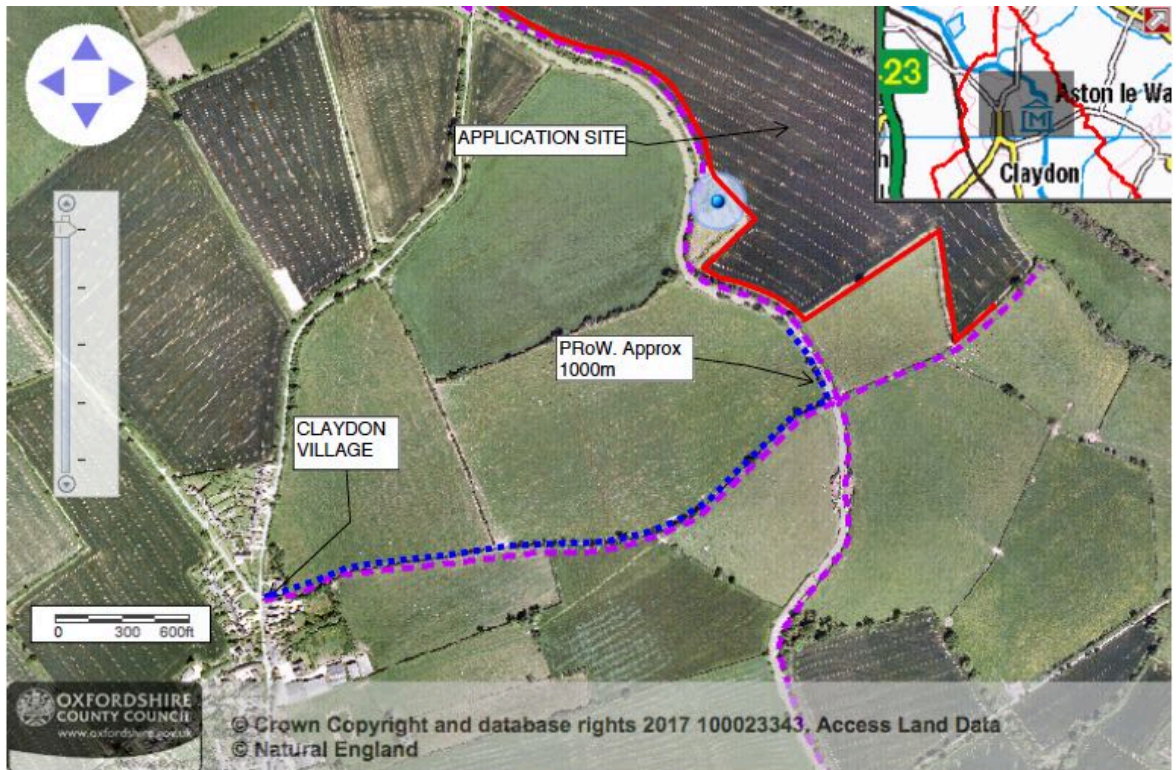


Fig 7.25.

- 7.26 Therefore, although the proposed marina is not located immediately to or within the settlement of Claydon it is sufficiently close enough to satisfy the general principle of policy ESD16.
- 7.27 The proposed development is for recreational purposes and as such policy SLE3 of the CLP2031 Part 1 is relevant. The policy states that the Council will support proposals for new or improved tourist facilities in sustainable locations where they accord with other policies in the plan to increase overnight stays and visitor numbers within the district. Tourism has an existing and a growing role to play in the local economy and developments in this sector will be supported, especially new attractions. The Council will support new tourism provision that can demonstrate direct benefit to the local visitor economy and which will sustain the rural economy.
- 7.28 It is recognized that facilities that provide for overnight accommodation not only meet the needs of visitors but also ensure that valuable expenditure associated with overnight stays is secured for the district and this helps to support local services and facilities, provides employment, promotes regeneration and helps to preserve the natural and historic environment.
- 7.29 There is a significant demand for boat accommodation and therefore moorings in Oxfordshire. The southern section of the Oxford Canal passing through Oxfordshire has the potential to provide these facilities. The planning regime relating to development associated with the River Thames and Green Belt makes it difficult to develop suitable facilities on the river. The Oxford Canal therefore is better placed to deliver the facilities required.
- 7.30 In order to assess the potential demand for marina facilities within the district, we have consulted data collated by the Canal and River Trust who are responsible for the management of the canal network in England and Wales and also a report entitled The Economic Impact of Tourism on Oxfordshire 2016 published by Destination Research on behalf of Experience Oxfordshire.
- 7.31 From time to time the Canal and River Trust publish reports of surveys that have been undertaken to assess the management and operation of the inland waterway network in the UK.
- 7.32 The most recent of which is their Boat Owner's Survey 2017. This is the latest bi-annual survey which is intended to monitor the demographic profile of boat owners, assess levels of satisfaction,

obtain information on boating related behaviour and identify key areas of improvement for the future. The most recent survey was undertaken in March/April 2017 and the results published in April 2017.

- 7.33 The report confirms that whilst not all boat owners are active cruisers, the majority of them use their boats for cruising the canal network. It can be assumed therefore that a significant percentage of the boats in the proposed marina would be used for cruising the local waterway network in their leisure time.
- 7.34 A development therefore that provides a facility for 250 recreational berths which are likely to be actively used by owners as either a holiday home or for cruising the canal network in Oxfordshire, is entirely compliant with the requirements of policy SL3.
- 7.35 It is also interesting to consider the distances travelled within a typical cruising day. Unfortunately, the most recent published data is from the 2011 Boat Owner's Survey, since then the CRT have ceased publishing this data as part of their report. However, it is unlikely that the boat usage will have changed significantly in the last seven years.
- 7.36 The survey confirms that the average number of days spent cruising was 65. This showed an increase when compared to the data from 2009 but that the distances were shorter. 27% of boaters were travelling less than 10 miles a day and 50% were travelling between 10-15 miles. Therefore, it is highly likely that the vast majority of boaters mooring at the marina will be cruising within the Cherwell District Council region.
- 7.37 As such they will be making a very valuable contribution to the local economy as they are likely to make use of local retail outlets, pubs, restaurants and tourist facilities within a distance of 15 miles from the marina. It would be reasonable to assume therefore that facilities that lie within a distance of 15 miles from the marina along the canal network will potentially benefit from the development.
- 7.38 Recent surveys by the CRT asked boaters to rate, in terms of importance, those factors that they take into account when considering where to moor their boat. The most important factors are a pleasant local environment and site security. These features are both very difficult to achieve with

online moorings, whereas a purpose built offline marina will provide both of these facilities to a very high standard.

- 7.39 The Boat Owner’s Survey published in 2009 by the CRT also assessed the distances that boaters were prepared to travel in their vehicle to their moorings. It identified that marina customers travel an average of 46 miles to their mooring. This figure reduces to 26 miles where the moorings are online or if the marina has less than 50 berths and increases to 56 miles for marinas with more than 50 berths. This means that in regions which have a plentiful supply of canals, such as the Midlands, boat owners have a significant number of marinas and moorings to choose from when selecting where to moor their boat. However, boaters in the South East, including Oxfordshire, have a much more limited choice.
- 7.40 Within a distance of 46 miles boat owners in Oxfordshire can only just get access to the southern reaches of the Grand Union Canal. They can also reach the Stratford on Avon Canal and the eastern reaches of the Kennet and Avon Canal.
- 7.41 However, compared to the canal network in the Midlands and the North, there are far fewer marinas located on these canals. Consequently, boaters located within Oxfordshire have very few choices of quality berths on the canal network. The proposed Marina will provide 250 high quality berths which will either attract local boaters to stay within the district, or encourage boaters from other regions to moor their boat in Oxfordshire, thus bringing important tourism revenue to the locality.
- 7.42 A significant benefit of the proposed marina therefore, is the contribution it would make to improving tourist facilities in Oxfordshire.
- 7.43 The most up to date statistics relating to tourism in Oxfordshire are found within the report entitled “The Economic Impact of Tourism on Oxfordshire – 2016” published by Destination Research on behalf of Experience Oxfordshire.
- 7.44 The report examines the volume, value and resultant economic impact of tourism on the county. The study is undertaken annually on behalf of Experience Oxfordshire and a copy of the report can be found in **Appendix T**.

- 7.45 The results confirm that there was a small decrease in demand for domestic overnight trips to the UK in 2016 of 5%. The figures for the South East of England however are more encouraging with the total number of nights spent in the region up 9% with spending up 6%. The figures for Oxfordshire reveal that there was an annual increase of 3.3% of visitors staying overnight in the county which resulted in a total income of nearly £699 million, an increase of 1.4% compared to the previous year.
- 7.46 Day visitors to Oxfordshire spent a total of £996 million, representing an increase of 7% compared to the previous year, giving a total spend of £1.695 billion spent by all visitors on their trip to the county, which was up 4.6% compared to 2015. This is a staggering figure when compared to the lack of growth in other sectors of the economy during the same period.
- 7.47 This expenditure supported 25,418 full time equivalent jobs and 34,856 actual jobs which was up 4.2% when compared to 2015. No other employment sector, either nationally or locally in Oxfordshire, has experienced growth of this magnitude. Tourism is therefore an extremely important business sector in Oxfordshire.
- 7.48 The figures for 2015 and 2016 reveal a change in the use of overnight accommodation. More visitors used non-serviced forms of accommodation leading to a slight drop in the use of hotels, bed and breakfasts and guest houses from 25% in 2015 to 24% in 2016. 44% of domestic overnight trips to the county involve staying in the homes of relatives or friends.
- 7.49 Of the total, 6% of all domestic overnight trips involved staying in non-serviced accommodation of which 1% of those domestic overnight trips involved staying on boats.
- 7.50 The figures confirm that boat moorings account for 19,000 domestic trips of more than 1 day or 1% of the total. These trips result in 122,000 domestic nights representing 2% of the total giving a total expenditure from boat mooring accommodation of approximately £6.929 million.
- 7.51 These figures demonstrate the importance of tourism to the local economy in the Cherwell district and in particular the valuable contribution that marina berths make. Although the proposed development will only provide an additional 250 recreational berths, this will make a small but very significant contribution to the tourism and recreational facilities within the district and this

development will undoubtedly help to generate a significant level of income for other local businesses dependent upon the tourist and recreational trade.

7.52 The proposed development therefore complies with the objectives of policies R7, R9, SL3 and ESD16 by encouraging economic growth associated with the use of the canal and contributes significantly to the leisure opportunities in the district. The proposal will also result in the creation of up to 4 full time and 4 part time jobs and therefore potentially contribute to the economy of the village and local area.

7.53 **Impact on Archaeology and Heritage Features**

7.54 An assessment of the proposed development's potential impact on archaeology and heritage assets has been completed by Dr Michael Dawson of CgMs, a copy of his report can be found in **Appendix Y**.

7.55 The assessment considers the proposed development in the context of relevant policies within the NPPF, namely those in section 12 with reference to Annex 2 and the CLP 2031 Part 1, namely policies ESD15 and 16.

7.56 The assessment has been carried out following the principles advocated by the NPPF and Historic England and assesses the potential impact of the development on below ground archaeology on the site, the potential impact on historical landscape features within 1km of the development site and the potential impact on the development on the Oxford Canal Conservation Area.

7.57 The assessment was prepared following a site visit carried out in May 2017, reference to a number of important relevant publications such as the Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England 2017) and data gathered from national, regional and local sources to establish the constituents of the historic environment that may be impacted by the development.

7.58 The assessment considers in some detail the potential impact of the development on

- Below ground archaeology;
- Heritage assets;

- The canal Conservation Area.

- 7.59 The report concludes that the site has little evident potential for significant surviving archaeological evidence and that it is therefore unlikely that further information regarding the history and archaeology of the site of more than local interest will be revealed by archaeological investigation. Consequently, although further evaluation is appropriate, the impact of the development on the historic environment can be mitigated and the effect of the development will therefore be neutral (no harm) in accordance with the purposes of the NPPF.
- 7.60 The report recommends that any further evaluation can be dealt with by way of condition and is likely to involve a geophysical assessment with trial trenching if deemed necessary.
- 7.61 With regard to the proposed development's potential impact on heritage assets, it notes that there are nine Listed Buildings within 1km of which six are within the village of Claydon and three on the Oxford Canal itself. The heritage assets associated with the canal are bridges 145 and 146 and Claydon Lock which are all Listed Grade II.
- 7.62 The Listed Buildings in the village of Claydon are far enough from the proposed development to remain unaffected within their setting and they were therefore scoped out of the assessment.
- 7.63 The assessment did however consider in more detail the potential impact of the development on the two bridges and lock. The assessment concludes that due to the topography and vegetation none of the heritage assets will be visible from the proposed development site and they would therefore be unaffected.
- 7.64 The proposed site lies immediately adjacent to part of the Oxford Canal Conservation Area and the assessment therefore considers in some detail the potential impact of the marina development on the Canal Conservation Area.
- 7.65 The site lies within Character Area 1 of the canal which extends from the canal's site at the northernmost tip of Oxfordshire southwards towards Banbury.
- 7.66 The assessment considers the proposed development in the context of guidance contained within section 12 of the NPPF and the Conservation Area appraisal that helped to inform the creation of

the Oxford Canal Conservation Area.

- 7.67 The report notes that the design of the marina takes account of its location immediately adjacent to the Canal Conservation Area. The basin has been designed with a convoluted meandering bank that provides discreet areas for small numbers of narrow boats to be moored together, separated by spits of land jutting out into the basin providing privacy, shelter from the wind and also breaking up the large expanse of water.
- 7.68 When this design feature is taken into account with the proposed planting scheme, the overall impact of the marina basin is much reduced.
- 7.69 Nevertheless, the marina introduces a modern recreational facility to the Oxford Canal which will have some impact and potential harm.
- 7.70 The report however concludes that the harm will be less than substantial in the terms of the NPPF and at the lower end of the spectrum of less than substantial harm when considered in the context of the entire Canal Conservation Area.
- 7.71 The assessment concludes that whilst the development will adversely affect the heritage value (character and appearance of the area) through the ability to appreciate the key views from the Conservation Area towards the east and therefore on its rural character, the creation of a marina will enhance the recreational facility of the canal and render it more sustainable in its current form.
- 7.72 The extent of the harm therefore should be balanced against the benefits delivered through the development of an important recreational facility that will provide offline moorings for 250 narrow boats with modern facilities such as electricity, water, pump out, security, etc.
- 7.73 As the principal use for the former commercial canal network in England is now recreational, the creation of an offline marina with modern facilities in this location is entirely in keeping with the current use of the canal. The development will deliver a significant benefit both to users of the marina and to local businesses reliant upon tourism in Oxfordshire and as such the benefits outweigh the less than substantial harm that may occur to the Canal Conservation Area.
- 7.74 **Landscape and Visual Impact**

- 7.75 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been completed and a copy of the report can be found in **Appendix Qa** with the relevant figures and viewpoints included as **Appendices Qb1-Qb4**
- 7.76 The relevant policies for consideration are C7, C28 and C29 of the CLP 1996 and ESD13 of the CLP 2031 Part 1.
- 7.77 The site is a large open arable field which at the time of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) was cropped to winter wheat with some of the headlands sown to an unharvested crop in an environmental scheme. The site is contained by tall mature hedgerows and trees along the boundaries with the Oxford Canal and the disused railway line to the south and north, with fragmented sections of hedge and groups of trees/scrub along the Boddington Road and a continuous hedge of variable height along the convoluted eastern boundary.
- 7.78 The site is not particularly typical of the surrounding landscape characterized by the District Scale Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) which tends to be more open and pastoral in character. The land currently falls away from the canal towards the disused railway line and construction of the marina will require raising of the ground to construct a dam that will contain the marina basin.
- 7.79 The proposed development would accord with the Landscape Strategy for the Upper Cherwell Basin LCA being sensitively sited in a suitable location along the Oxford Canal where there is a good level of existing mature vegetation to provide visual containment. The nature of the proposed development is sympathetic to the canal setting and provides a beneficial functional feature to encourage the future use and enjoyment of the canal which in itself is a feature of the landscape.
- 7.80 Whilst built development would be introduced, the new building has been designed to replicate the types of buildings that are found within open countryside in the locality or adjacent to the canal.
- 7.81 Most of the hedgerows would be retained and where it is necessary to remove them, they would be replaced and further extended to provide species diverse native hedgerows. New native tree and shrub planting would be created, as well as extended wetland habitats with shallow sections and a significant increase in the length of native marginal aquatic vegetation.
- 7.82 The development would be visually well contained with little influence on views beyond the

immediate visual context of the site. The users that would be mainly affected by the proposed development would be the road users of a short section of the Boddington Road where there would be a major change to the view and for canal users for a short section of the Oxford Canal. Canal boat users as well as walkers, anglers and cyclists along the towpath would experience a very noticeable change at the proposed canal entrance to the marina however, the proposed development would form a distinctive new feature along the canal which is entirely consistent with its use.

- 7.83 With the establishment of the proposed planting the marina would become an integral part of the visual setting of the canal, the only residential property to be noticeably affected by the proposed development is a small house immediately adjacent to the canal which is the ownership of the Applicants.
- 7.84 The proposed marina has been designed to provide a self-contained location that relates to the traditional character of the canal and the local landscape.
- 7.85 The proposal would result in major changes to site features including the loss of arable farmland and the extensive earth works required to create the dam and irrigation reservoir. However, the proposed soft landscaping would soften and naturalise the changes in land form and would provide an important influence on the site, more than compensating for the loss of a section of mature hedge along the canal, the patchy scrub along the Boddington Road, as well as the monoculture of arable crops. The proposed vegetation would establish to provide beneficial new landscape and ecological features.
- 7.86 The proposed development would also have a very localised effect on landscape character due to the influence of land form and existing vegetation which would contain the proposed development. The nature, character and design of the marina would be sympathetic to the canal and rural character of the local landscape. The site is located within the Upper Cherwell Basin LCA and within this landscape the canal is a key characteristic feature. The marina would form a new and distinctive focal feature on the canal that entirely relates to its historic working past and its current use as an important leisure facility. The existing land form comprising woodland, mature trees and hedges along the boundaries of the site visually contain it. As such, there would be very

limited visibility of the proposed development beyond the immediate context of the site.

- 7.87 The LVIA assesses 12 viewpoints to represent different users and geographical locations. The report concludes that there would be no significant effect on views, with most views being unaffected or the change being negligible or minor. The principal change occurs for road users over a short section of Boddington Road, which includes the bridge over the Oxford Canal, where there would be very evident change to the views. There would also be a prominent change for towpath and canal boat users at the canal entrance which would affect a small section of the canal. For the rest of the canal and for much of the canal adjacent to the site, the mature, continuous and dense hedgerow along the southern boundary would essentially prevent views of the proposed marina. The additional proposed planting to buffer the existing hedgerow will effectively prevent views of the proposed marina from the canal-side towpath.
- 7.88 The proposed changes therefore will not significantly harm the character and topography of the landscape and therefore comply with policy C7 of the adopted Local Plan.
- 7.89 Policies C28 and C29 of the adopted Local Plan both seek to ensure that new development is designed to an appropriate standard which is sympathetic to the surroundings. Careful consideration has been given to the design of the marina and in particular to the built forms that form part of its infrastructure and the marina has been designed to be complementary to the characteristics of the Oxford Canal and is largely screened from the canal by existing land form and vegetation.
- 7.90 The only building proposed is sited on the far side of the marina basin away from the canal and has been designed to replicate a range of traditional farm buildings. They are therefore unlikely to cause any harm to the character and appearance of the wider landscape and the visual amenities of the area and as such the development therefore complies with policies C28 and C29.
- 7.91 **Transport – Highways and Parking**
- 7.92 The proposed development provides 250 recreational moorings for boaters using the Oxford Canal. This is the maximum number of berths that can be accommodated within the marina basin as detailed on drawing reference A05/010G in **Appendix K**.

- 7.93 A Transport Assessment has been prepared, a copy of which can be found in **Appendix O**.
- 7.94 The proposal includes 200 car parking spaces which is sufficient to accommodate the total number of vehicles that is likely to be on site at any point in time. Although the marina accommodates 250 boats, it is highly unlikely that all boat users will visit the marina at the same time. Sections 5.25 and 5.26 in the Transport Assessment confirm that the British Waterways Board 2008 report confirmed during summer weekends, which is the busiest period for an inland marina, there would be demand for 64 parking spaces per 100 berths. This would indicate a requirement for 160 spaces for a 250-berth marina. As such, 200 car parking spaces will more than accommodate users of the marina as well as staff members, even at peak times.
- 7.95 Highways access will be taken from the Boddington Road directly into the site.
- 7.96 The creation of the new entrance splay requires removal of some existing vegetation however, the roadside hedge can be retained and trimmed back in order to achieve the necessary visibility splay.
- 7.97 The Transport Assessment has considered the potential impact on the local transport network. Section 5 of the report includes reference to vehicle movements calculated using TRICS data and data provided for the expansion of an existing marina in Northamptonshire based on actual traffic counts. The TRICS figures includes data from marinas that have a full range of facilities including catering, boat repairs and sales and in 2 cases, a boat hire business. Some also admit the general public and have shops and catering to suit.
- 7.98 As the proposed development does not include many of the features that are included in the TRICS dataset, the assessment has used the data produced by the former British Waterways Board and actual data from a Marina at Crick in Northamptonshire.
- 7.99 The figures confirm that vehicles movements associated with boat usage at marinas are very low and are highly unlikely to have an adverse impact on the local highway network.
- 7.100 The report has also considered the Highways comments that were received following an application to increase the number of berths at Cropedy Marina in 2016. The proposal involved the creation of a further 100 berths in addition to the 249 berths that had already been permitted. The original application for 249 berths had predicted a maximum total of 120 daily vehicle

movements which was considered acceptable. Monitoring of actual vehicle movements however revealed an average of 53 vehicle movements which was significantly lower than the 120 previously predicted.

- 7.101 The data in section 5 of the Transport Assessment confirms these figures, with the British Waterways figures for a week day indicating a total of 43 vehicle movements during the day and the actual figures for the operational marina at Crick confirming a figure of 41 vehicle movements on a weekday.
- 7.102 Weekends are normally busier with the Crick figures indicating vehicle movements of 123 vehicle movements per day for a 250-berth marina.
- 7.103 As the Boddington Road is very lightly trafficked, the estimated traffic generation is unlikely to cause congestion at the site access junction or on the local road network.
- 7.104 Construction of the marina does not require the export of any material off site, consequently construction traffic vehicle movements will be minimal.
- 7.105 The heavy construction traffic such as excavators, bulldozers and dumpers will be delivered on low loaders to the Applicants' existing farmyard at Springfield Farm, located to the north west of the proposed site. The excavation equipment will be unloaded in the farmyard and driven across farmland using existing tracks to the construction site.
- 7.106 This will avoid the need for heavy construction traffic to travel through the village of Claydon and over the existing canal bridges.
- 7.107 The proposed marina is located within walking distance from the village of Claydon via existing public rights of way. See Figure 7.25. The public footpath provides access from the marina to the bus stop in Claydon village where it is possible on Thursdays to catch a bus to Banbury.
- 7.108 Whilst in an ideal world it may be preferable for the marina to be located in a more sustainable location, marinas must be located adjacent to the canal and the sequential test in **Appendices Ra & Rb** has assessed all other potential locations along the Oxford Canal within the Cherwell district and apart from one other location (Site 12), there are no other more sustainable potential

locations than the proposed site at Glebe Farm.

7.109 **Ecological Impact**

7.110 A preliminary Ecological Appraisal based on a Phase 1 Habitat Survey has been completed, a copy of the report can be found in **Appendix U**.

7.111 The survey was carried out in March 2017 by RSK Environmental Limited (RSK).

7.112 The purpose of the survey and subsequent report was to identify whether the proposed marina development will have an adverse impact on protected species or their habitat.

7.113 It also considered the overall impact of the proposed development on biodiversity and wildlife, the conclusions within the report have been used to inform the design of the marina and in particular the landscaping and ecological enhancements that have been incorporated.

7.114 The relevant policies are policies C2 and C5 within the CLP 1996 and policy ESD10 within the CLP 2031 Part 1.

7.115 The intention of the policies, along with those contained within the NPPF, is to ensure that protected species and their habitats are not adversely impacted by development and that development proposals include features that are designed to enhance and encourage biodiversity.

7.116 The comprehensive survey carried out by RSK and their subsequent report has identified that there are no statutory designated ecological sites within 2km of the site boundary and therefore there are no statutory sites that will be affected by the proposed development. The North Claydon disused railway's local wildlife site is immediately adjacent to the site boundary but separated by a strip of land that remains unaffected by the development. Whilst there is a small amount of existing hedgerow that will need to be removed in order to facilitate the development, neither of these hedgerows are considered important under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 and therefore as long as their removal is carried out in line with the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 outside of the breeding bird season there will be no adverse impact.

7.117 10 semi-mature ash trees will also need to be removed from the hedgerow alongside the canal in order to construct the new marina entrance. The ash trees were assessed for their potential to

- support roosting bats and the report concludes that they have no features which may provide roosting opportunities.
- 7.118 There were no rare or protected plant species recorded in the survey, although this was carried out in March. However, the marina basin and most of the infrastructure lies within the existing arable field which is highly unlikely to support any such rare or protected plant species. Most of the perimeter vegetation will remain in place and unaffected by the development.
- 7.119 Although evidence of badgers was found adjacent to the site and the site currently provides some opportunities for foraging, the sett is far enough away from proposed works that it will not be directly affected and it is highly unlikely that any resident animals will be disturbed. The additional landscaping and planting around the marina is likely to enhance the habitat for foraging badgers.
- 7.120 The site is considered to have a moderate suitability for foraging and commuting bats. Although 10 semi-mature ash trees are to be removed, none of these have potential for roosting opportunities and there are no buildings on the site. Bats are therefore unlikely to be affected by the development.
- 7.121 The development itself however is likely to enhance the area by the introduction of two new areas of standing water which will provide good foraging opportunities.
- 7.122 The ecologists have recommended a management plan is put in place, including proposals for lighting to ensure that the potential foraging and commuting routes around the site remain either unlit or with low level lighting only.
- 7.123 The applicants intend to only use low-level lighting and as such, the development is unlikely to have any adverse impact on bats.
- 7.124 The site provides a range of habitats that are likely to be used by breeding birds, these habitats are principally on the boundary of the site and lie outside the development area.
- 7.125 The proposed development will enhance the habitat in the locality for breeding birds through the planting of a significant area of trees and shrubs.
- 7.126 The survey identifies that there are terrestrial habitats suitable for greater crested newts (GCN)

and three ponds potentially accessible by newts within 500 metres of the site. Access was gained to two of the ponds which were found to be unsuitable, access was not granted to the third pond however the terrestrial habitat in the immediate vicinity of this pond provides excellent opportunities for GCN, as does the disused railway to the north of the field in which pond 3 is located. The pond and this habitat are also separated from the site by the public highway and it is therefore unlikely that the newts would use the development site in preference to the suitable habitat around this pond and the disused railway line.

- 7.127 Although some of the habitat around the periphery of the arable field could be suitable for terrestrial phase amphibians and/or reptiles, this land is not permanently sown, as it is in a rotational unharvested headland environmental option which is sown annually; the crop that was in place at the time of the survey in March 2017 was Triticale.
- 7.128 These areas are included in the Applicants' Higher-Level Stewardship Scheme under the unharvested, fertilizer free conservation headland option. This particular habitat is only in place for short periods of time before it is ploughed and reseeded to another suitable crop for this option.
- 7.129 The areas identified by the ecologists in March 2017 are currently sown to spring oats under the same unharvested, fertilizer free conservation headland option. The oats will be left unharvested and in place until spring 2019 when they would be ploughed and re-sown to another suitable crop. These areas do not therefore provide a long-term habitat for either terrestrially based amphibians or reptiles as the land is ploughed and re-sown on an annual basis.
- 7.130 The proposed development however, does include significant areas of sown grass around the marina and the new lake which will remain in situ indefinitely following construction and these areas will provide suitable habitat for terrestrially based amphibians and reptiles. The development therefore offers a significant enhancement to these species.
- 7.131 The survey also identified the potential presence of otters within the locality. The development is unlikely to impede otter movements or affect their foraging opportunities, however the creation of a large expanse of water within the marina basin and the lake will undoubtedly improve the habitat for use by otters and is likely to deliver an overall benefit and enhancement for this species.

- 7.132 The survey did not find evidence of water vole in the immediate vicinity and the most suitable habitat found along the banks of the canal is far enough away from the proposed canal entrance to not be affected by the development.
- 7.133 Whilst mitigation for water vole is not considered necessary, it is anticipated that any water voles in the wider area will benefit from the ecological enhancements incorporated into the proposed development. The lake in particular, which although to be used as an irrigation reservoir, will remain largely undisturbed and could provide suitable habitat for water voles following establishment of the marginal vegetation.
- 7.134 In conclusion, the proposed development will not have any adverse impact on protected species or their habitats and the proposed landscaping and ecological improvements are likely to provide significant enhancements for many of these species that have been assessed.
- 7.135 **Flood Risk Assessment**
- 7.136 Policy ESD6 of the CLP 2031 Part 1 sets out the Council's policies that are intended to manage and reduce flood risk. The NPPF and its guidance dictates that new development should not increase flood risk and the Council's policy reflects national policy.
- 7.137 The policy confirms that development proposals will be assessed according to the sequential approach and it will only be permitted in areas of flood risk where there are no reasonably available sites in areas of lower flood risk.
- 7.138 Site specific Flood Risk Assessments will also be required where development proposals impact on Flood Zones 2 or 3 or the proposals are greater than 1 hectare in Flood Zone 1.
- 7.139 A Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared by EAS, a copy of the report and its appendices can be found in **Appendices Ga, Gb1 and Gb2**.
- 7.140 The assessment has been carried out in accordance with the advice set out in the NPPF and its Technical Guidance published in March 2012 and the Planning Practice Guidance published in March 2014.
- 7.141 The assessment has considered the proposed development in the context of the relevant policies

within the NPPF and CLP 2031 Part 1, namely policies ESD6, ESD7 and ESD16. The assessment has also considered the Cherwell and West Oxfordshire Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2009) and the Oxfordshire County Council Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (2011).

- 7.142 The majority of the site lies within Flood Zone 1 which is at low risk of flooding from fluvial or tidal sources. A small area along the northern boundary of the site is within Flood Zone 3. The area covers approximately 0.26 of a hectare. It is proposed to raise the ground level in this area in order to construct the highways access and part of the internal access roads. The raising of the ground will ensure that neither the highways access nor any of the internal access roads will be prone to flooding.
- 7.143 A Sequential Test has been carried out to assess whether there are other more suitable sites in the District where the construction of a Marina would not impact on flood zone 2 or 3 and would meet other critical criteria. A copy of the report and associated plan can be found in **Appendices Ra and Rb**
- 7.144 The FRA acknowledges that the irrigation reservoir/lake which will be constructed as part of the development (providing a source of clay with which to construct the embankment containing the marina basin) will provide sufficient compensation for the loss of Flood Zone 3 volume.
- 7.145 The proposed development will not therefore have any adverse impact on surface water flooding.
- 7.146 Policy ESD6 requires an assessment of a potential breach of the canal where development is located in close proximity to it.
- 7.147 The proposed marina will be hydraulically linked to the canal and is water compatible development, as such, the risks to the marina from a breach of the canal are minimal. As the marina basin is hydrologically connected to the canal the level of the water in the basin will rise and fall with the canal. As such, a breach of the canal could potentially empty the basin. However, the basin can be isolated from the canal using the stop plank structure constructed in the entrance from the marina onto the canal. If there is a breach of the canal and there is a sharp fall in water level in the marina basin, the stop planks would be immediately employed to prevent any further water escaping from the marina basin into the canal.

- 7.148 As the proposed volume of water to be held within the marina basin is greater than 25,000m³ the design and construction of the marina basin itself will be subject to approval by a qualified panel engineer as per the requirements of the Reservoirs Act 1975.
- 7.149 The marina basin will therefore be designed by the panel engineer to a very high standard which is intended to minimise the potential risk of a breach.
- 7.150 The assessment has considered the EA flood mapping for a potential breach of the nearby Wormleighton Reservoir which provides water for the canal and is located 1.2km to the west of the site.
- 7.151 The EA Flood Map illustrates that a breach event at the Wormleighton Reservoir would lead to flooding along the route of the High Furlong Brook through an area of agricultural land and is therefore unlikely to cause a flood event within any settlement.
- 7.152 The proposed water compatible development is therefore unlikely to have an adverse impact on flooding.
- 7.153 The assessment also considers surface water drainage from the development site and proposes a SUDS drainage scheme that complies with both national and local planning policies regarding sustainable drainage.
- 7.154 The surface water from the hardstanding areas that sit outside the dam will drain via a petrol interceptor into a swale before finally draining into the water course located to the north of the site.
- 7.155 All surface water from the roof of the building and access path surrounding the marina basin will drain into the marina basin itself.
- 7.156 The proposed discharge rate will be no greater than the 100 year Greenfield run off rate.
- 7.157 The assessment concludes that the development proposals comply with the guidance provided by the NPPF with regard to flood risk and surface water drainage.
- 7.158 **Consultation with Canal and River Trust and Parish Council**

- 7.159 The Applicants have engaged with the Canal and River Trust via their New Marinas Unit and have completed the various stages in the New Marinas process including the submission of an Expression of Interest application, Feasibility Appraisal and Pre-Planning discussions.
- 7.160 The feasibility submission provided the Canal and River Trust (CRT) with full details of the proposal. The CRT carry out their own appraisal of the feasibility submission and the project will only proceed to planning if the CRT confirm that the feasibility submission is acceptable. A copy of the Appraisal can be found in **Appendix D**.
- 7.161 The CRT responded on 22 May 2017 confirming that the feasibility submission was acceptable.
- 7.162 The Water Management Team at the CRT undertook a Stage 2 Water Resources Study in relation to the proposal to build a 250-berth marina at Glebe Farm.
- 7.163 They confirmed that although the proposed marina will place a greater demand on the Oxford and Grand Union Canal's Hydrological Unit's water resources, on balance, the impact is minimal and therefore deemed acceptable.
- 7.164 The Water Resources Team recommended that the marina is granted permission to proceed and that a Network Access Agreement can be negotiated with the marina operator.
- 7.165 They also noted that filling the basin will require a significant amount of water and that the filling may need to be undertaken over an extended period. They advise that the programme should reflect this and discussions will be undertaken with the CRT upon receipt of the next stage in their process which is the submission of a Detailed Design Construction stage submission for works not affecting the CRT. It was pointed out that the marina fill is best approached out of the main boating season when reservoirs have been refilled.
- 7.166 The Applicants have also consulted with the CRT regarding the design and technical proposals of the marina & its associated infrastructure through their pre-planning process.
- 7.167 The Applicants have also consulted with Claydon Parish Council. A meeting was held in November 2017 and attended by the Chairman and 2 other Parish Councilors, the Applicants and their agent.
- 7.168 The Applicants explained their proposals and provided copies of the site layout.

- 7.169 The issues that were discussed included;
- Transport and traffic issues
 - Lighting and residential amenity
 - Towpath
 - Whether facilities could be provided for Kayakers.
- 7.170 The PC's main concern with traffic matters related to speed rather than volume.
- 7.171 The Applicants confirmed that all lighting would be downward facing and where appropriate would use proximity sensors. This is to ensure that the lighting does not cause light pollution for the local area or have an adverse impact on bats.
- 7.172 A towpath bridge would be constructed to a specification to be agreed with the Canal and Rivers Trust. It would be compliant with the Equalities Act.
- 7.173 The Applicants wish to use the lake for irrigation purposes, however, they will consider the possibility of allowing access for a local kayaking club, subject to agreement.
- 7.174 **Agricultural Land Assessment**
- 7.175 Section 11 of the NPPF sets out national policies relating to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment.
- 7.176 Paragraph 112 confirms that preservation of the best and most versatile agricultural land is an important consideration when determining large scale development that potentially impacts on the best and most versatile agricultural land. The best and most versatile agricultural land is described as land in Grades 1, 2 and 3A of the Agricultural Land Classification.
- 7.177 The proposed marina will result in the loss of approximately 19.5 Ha of agricultural land.
- 7.178 The land was subject to an Agricultural Land Classification Survey on 31 March 2017 which has graded the land according to the current Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) guidelines and criteria for England and Wales (MAFF 1988). A copy of the report can be found in **Appendix V**.

- 7.179 The report confirms that approximately 2.37 Ha of the site is classified as ALC Grade 3A with the remaining 15.99 Ha classified as ALC Grade 3B.
- 7.180 The marina basin itself, and its associated infrastructure including car parking and access roads, will be located principally on Grade 3B land.
- 7.181 The lake will be located on 3A and 3B grade land. Although only approximately 50% of the area of land designated as sub Grade 3A will be affected, the entire area of Grade 3A land will be lost to agricultural production as it will not be possible to farm the remaining area following construction of the marina and the lake.
- 7.182 The proposed development would therefore lead to the loss of approximately 2.37 Ha of Grade 3A land.
- 7.183 However, it is the Applicants' intention to utilize the lake as an irrigation reservoir. This will potentially result in a significant improvement to the quality of land to the north of the development site which would be irrigated following construction of the lake. The lake will be fed by ground water, surface water from the surrounding field and by the surface water drain that takes excess water from the swale during periods of heavy rainfall.
- 7.184 The arable land to the north of the disused railway has potential to grow potatoes and other high value root crops. However, in order to do so the Applicants would need to irrigate these crops.
- 7.185 The lake/irrigation reservoir covers approximately 2.16 Ha of land. The lake will have an average depth of approximately 2.5 metres giving a total volume of 54,000m³. As the underlying soil type is clay, the lake will hold water and it is anticipated that approximately 50% of its capacity will be available on an annual basis for irrigation purposes, subject to the Applicants obtaining the necessary consent for abstraction from the Environment Agency.
- 7.186 This source of water would potentially allow the Applicants to grow up to 14 Ha (35 acres) of potatoes per annum. Whilst this represents only a small acreage when considered in the context of the total farmed acreage, it is still significant as potatoes generate much higher levels of gross margin than traditional combinable crops. The Applicants would market these locally grown potatoes themselves which would also increase the profit margin.

7.187 Therefore, although the construction of the lake would result in the loss of approximately 2.37 Ha of Grade 3A land, it would enable approximately 14 Ha of land elsewhere on the farm to be irrigated which is likely to improve its ALC grade, therefore, there is likely to be no net loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

7.188 **Residential Amenity**

7.189 The village of Claydon lies approximately 640 metres to the south west of the site. The closest dwellings are separated by the canal and numerous agricultural fields, hedgerows and trees and it is not therefore anticipated that the proposed development would have any adverse impact on residential amenity for those properties within the village.

7.190 The closest residential property to the site is located immediately adjacent to it between the site and the canal. This property is within the ownership of the Applicants. The existing hedge surrounding the property will be maintained, which will provide an effective visual screen between the property and the development. The marina will be owned and operated by the Applicants who also own and operate their family farm.

7.191 The closest third party residential property to the site is Claydon Hay Farm approximately 530 metres to the north.

7.192 Existing vegetation will be retained on the northern boundary of the site. This vegetation is well established and mature and provides a substantial barrier between the site and Claydon Hey Farm.

7.193 The existing roadside hedge on the western boundary adjacent to the Boddington Road will be retained and an additional buffer of trees and shrubs will be planted between the Boddington Road and the yard area. The yard will be used for removing boats for the purposes of “blacking”.

7.194 The process of blacking protects the steel narrow boat hull from rust, pitting and rubbing and generally extends the life of the hull. Once removed from the water, the boat is pressure washed to remove any debris such as weeds, mud and rust. Once clean, a new layer of either bituminous or epoxy paint is then applied before returning the boat to the water.

7.195 As the marina is providing berths for 250 boats, anywhere between 84 and 125 boats per annum

would be removed and “re-blacked”.

- 7.196 The process does not generate significant amounts of noise and it is highly unlikely that the closest third party property being the stables some 110 metres to the west and separated by substantial new and existing planting and a road, will suffer any noise nuisance from this activity.
- 7.197 The remaining activity which simply involves the mooring of boats and boats passing into and out of the marina does not generate any significant levels of noise.
- 7.198 The lighting scheme for the marina will comprise of low level lighting on the walkways and jetties. The bollards that provide water and electricity for the moorers also include LED downlights that are designed to provide low level lighting onto the walkways and jetties themselves, for safety purposes. There will be no additional lighting in the yard area and the lighting provided on the clubhouse building will be downward facing low lights on PIR sensors.
- 7.199 An example of the type of bollard will be used on the jetties and walkways can be found in **Appendix Wa**.
- 7.200 An example of the type of lighting to be installed on the clubhouse building can be found in **Appendix Wb**.
- 7.201 A certain number of lighting posts will be provided within the car parks in order to provide some lighting for safety purposes. These LED downward facing lights will be contained within wooden posts, an example of which can be found in **Appendix Wc**.
- 7.202 The Applicants are mindful of the potential to create light pollution when constructing such a development in open countryside and are very keen to avoid this, not only to protect the amenity of the closest dwellings and road users but also to ensure that the lighting does not have an adverse impact on bats.
- 7.203 One bollard per four moorings will be provided on the jetties. The PIR lights on the clubhouse will be provided on either side of the entrance doors and the timber bollards in the car park will be provided at vehicle entry and exit points and pedestrian entry and exit points.
- 7.204 **Trees and Landscaping**

- 7.205 The Applicants are committed to retaining as much of the existing vegetation on and around the proposed site as possible.
- 7.206 As such, all existing trees and shrubs will be retained apart from a small number of woody shrubs adjacent to the new entrance and a section of hedge adjacent to the canal, totalling approximately 75 metres in length, along with seven semi-mature and three immature ash trees. These have to be removed in order to allow construction of the marina entrance from the basin into the canal.
- 7.207 An Arboricultural Assessment is submitted with the application and can be found in **Appendix X**.
- 7.208 The assessment confirms that there will be a loss of 10 trees on the south western boundary adjacent to the canal towpath and a small clump of woody shrubs on the northern boundary.
- 7.209 To compensate for the loss of trees, a substantial amount of new woodland will be established within and surrounding the development site comprising locally native trees and shrubs.
- 7.210 A landscaping scheme has been proposed which includes planting of approximately 1.33 Ha of new woodland and hedgerows.
- 7.211 The landscaping scheme has been designed to ensure that the development is screened within the landscape and as such, accords with policies ESD13 and ESD15 of CLP 2031 Part 1.
- 7.212 A copy of the landscaping plan can be found in **Appendix La**.

8.0 SUMMARY

- 8.1 This Planning Statement forms part of the suite of documents submitted with the planning application and assesses the development in the context of its compliance with national and local planning policies.
- 8.2 The proposal involves the construction of a marina basin on agricultural land immediately to the north of the Oxford Canal. The marina basin would provide offline moorings for 250 narrow boats. The proposed development also includes the creation of a new highways access from the Boddington Road into the site, the construction of a clubhouse building providing necessary facilities for the marina business and boaters, hardstanding and boat lift out bays that will provide

- an area for basic maintenance and minor repairs of the narrow boats and other infrastructure associated with the operation of the marina.
- 8.3 The Applicants are farmers who own and farm the land on which the development is proposed. If planning permission were granted, the Applicants would develop and operate the marina themselves which would provide the farm with a valuable diversification opportunity.
- 8.4 The Applicants' farming business will be heavily impacted by the construction of HS2 which bisects the farm. It will result in the loss of approximately 130 Ac of land which will have a significant adverse impact on the financial viability of the farming business. In order to help offset the financial impact of HS2 on the applicant's farm, they are seeking to develop a non-farming business on their land that will also benefit the local area.
- 8.5 The marina facility will provide a valuable and in demand recreational resource for boaters which will provide them with safe, secure, modern moorings from which they can base themselves when cruising on the Oxford Canal.
- 8.6 Tourism in Oxfordshire provides the county with a valuable source of revenue and the figures referred to in this report confirm that overnight stays on boats are very popular and the tourism revenue generated by this form of tourism is significant.
- 8.7 The new facility will therefore secure and maintain valuable tourism revenue for north Oxfordshire and many other local businesses such as pubs, restaurants, retail outlets and tourist facilities will benefit from the 250 potential boats that would be moored in the marina.
- 8.8 The proposed development has been considered in the context of its compliance with national and local planning policies, particularly those relating to flood risk, transport, landscape and visual impact, biodiversity and ecology, loss of agricultural land and residential amenity.
- 8.9 The application complies with all relevant policies.
- 8.10 A sequential test has been carried out to assess whether there are other more suitable sites within the district that would not impact on flood zones 2 or 3 and meet other criteria that are necessary for a successful marina development.

- 8.11 Having assessed a total of 14 alternative sites, the report concludes that only one other site has potential for a marina and this site is located within an area of land that has been designated for residential development on the outskirts of Banbury.
- 8.12 The marina has been carefully designed to ensure that it minimises its impact on the landscape and environment. Its construction does not involve the loss of any valuable habitat; however, it does offer significant potential for enhancement through the creation of a significant area of new water bodies with soft margins around both the marina basin and lake, providing valuable new habitats. The development also includes the creation of a large area of grassland that is currently arable. Some of the grass area will be managed for the benefit of wildlife including birds, invertebrates and reptiles.
- 8.13 An extensive landscaping scheme is proposed which will create new hedgerows along with areas of indigenous trees and shrubs. The new hedgerows and trees will more than replace the small number of woody shrubs and length of existing hedgerow that will have to be removed to facilitate development. This soft landscaping will also help the new development to blend into the landscape whilst delivering significant potential enhancement for ecology and biodiversity.
- 8.14 Vehicle movements associated with inland marina developments are generally low, particularly when the marina facilities are restricted solely to the mooring of boats and minor repairs for boaters moored in the marina. The impact of the development on the local transport network will therefore be minimal. As there is no need to import or export material from the site during construction, the construction phase is also unlikely to have any adverse impact on the local road network.
- 8.15 The proposed development includes the construction of a lake which will also serve as an irrigation reservoir for the Applicants' farm. This potential source of water will allow the Applicants to diversify their cropping to become less reliant on subsidised combinable crops and provide them with an opportunity to grow valuable root crops such as potatoes which do not require subsidy in order to remain profitable. With Brexit looming and the Government's intention to withdraw agricultural subsidies for combinable crops, this the Applicants farming business needs to adapt to survive. The loss of a significant amount of land to HS2 further exacerbates matters.

- 8.16 The design and planning process followed by the Applicants and their agents has been iterative and has involved consultation with the Canal and Rivers Trust and Claydon Parish Council.
- 8.17 The proposed development would deliver a significant benefit to users of the Oxford Canal and to the wider local area by providing a valuable recreational and tourism facility. It complies with national and local planning policies, where there is potential for conflict, the application provides substantive reasons why this particular element of the policy may need to be set aside in order to allow permission to be granted.
- 8.18 We dutifully request that planning permission is granted for the proposed development.