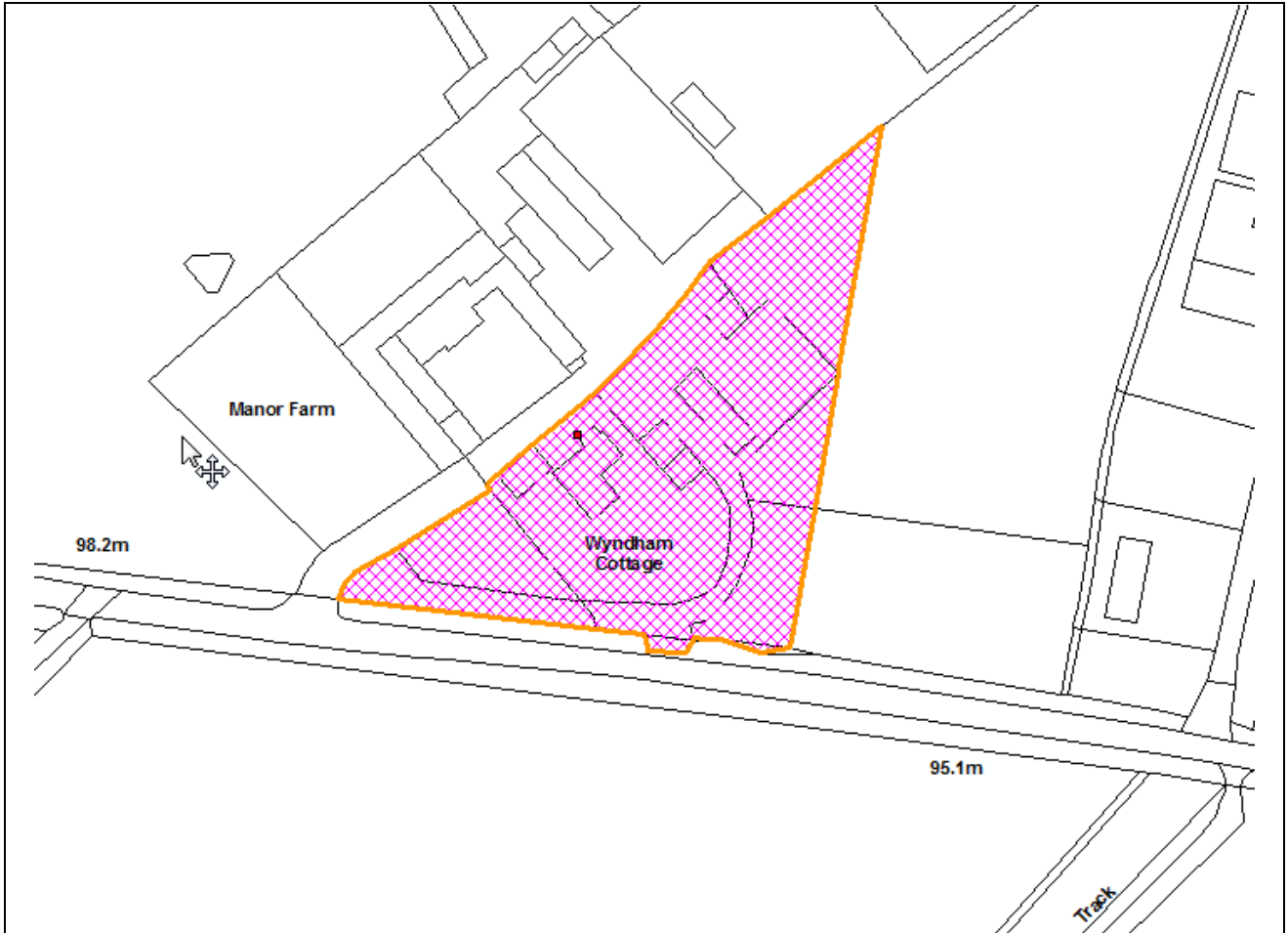


18/02345/APP



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REFERENCE NO	PARISH/WARD	DATE RECEIVED
18/02345/APP	Newton Longville	02/07/18
CONVERSION AND EXTENSION TO REAR AND LINK BETWEEN EXISTING BUILDINGS TO CREATE A SINGLE DWELLING WITH ACCESS, PARKING, AND AMENITY SPACE, TOGETHER WITH ALTERATIONS TO THE FENESTRATION WYNDHAM COTTAGE. MK17 0AU	The Local Member(s) for this area is/are: - Councillor Neil Blake Councillor Ben Everitt	
MR & MRS DEVEREUX		
STREET ATLAS PAGE NO.57		

1.0 The Key Issues in determining this application are:-

a) The planning policy position and the approach to be taken in the determination of the application.

b) Whether the proposal would constitute a sustainable form of development.

- **Delivering a sufficient supply of homes**
- **Building a strong, competitive economy**
- **Promoting healthy and safe communities**
- **Promoting sustainable transport**
- **Making effective use of land**
- **Achieving well-designed places**
- **Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding**
- **Conserving and enhancing the natural environment**

c) Impact on residential amenities

The recommendation is that permission be **REFUSED**

Conclusion and recommendation

1.1 The application has been evaluated against the extant Development Plan and the NPPF and the report has assessed the application against the planning principles of the NPPF and whether the proposals deliver sustainable development. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development which for decision making 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are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole. .

- 1.2 The development site comprises former agricultural buildings in the countryside formerly approved for conversion to a single dwelling in June 2017, which has not been implemented but the permission remains extant. The current proposal seeks to convert the buildings on site together with a single storey rear extension to the western-most building and a single storey 'link' extension between the two buildings. The extent of rebuilding remains unclear but the extent of the extensions proposed directly conflicts with policy RA11 of the AVDLP which seeks to promote true conversions that do not involve significant rebuild or extensions. This is further reflected in the guidance of the NPPF as discussed below in this report. Furthermore, there are no special circumstances put forward by the applicant to demonstrate that these significant extensions are required as part of the conversion works.
- 1.3 It is accepted that the development would make a contribution to the housing land supply which is to be attributed limited weight in the planning balance, as it is tempered due to the scale of development that is proposed and in the context that the Authority can demonstrate a 5 years housing supply. There would also be economic benefits in terms of the construction of the development itself and those associated with the resultant increase in population on the site to which limited positive weight should be attached.
- 1.4 The landscape impact is not identified as harmful and it is acknowledged that there would be some limited benefits from restoring the buildings and removing the attached shed to the south which is unsightly in addition to the re-landscaping/removal of some hardsurfaces which would contribute positively but some limited impact for the introduction of unjustified development on the localised landscape as a result of the two extensions proposed.
- 1.5 Compliance with some of the other core planning principles of the NPPF have been demonstrated in terms of heritage, biodiversity, impact upon trees, flood risk and residential amenity. However, these matters do not represent benefits to the wider area but demonstrate an absence of harm to which weight should be attributed neutrally.
- 1.6 In terms of the harm, the proposal includes the erection of two extensions to the buildings in the countryside which will result in harm to the rural character of the area. Whilst described as a conversion, the proposal would require an undisclosed level of re-build and replacement together with the two aforementioned extensions and would fail to comply with

policies GP35 and RA11 of the AVDLP and the advice in the 'The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings. This is a matter which should be afforded significant negative weight. In these circumstances the proposal would constitute an unsustainable and inappropriate form of development of a site situated in the countryside which has no provision and services to support further residential growth and which would be dependent on the private car for transport. This in itself must be attributed considerable negative weight. The failure to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework and the harm caused to the rural setting significantly outweighs any benefits of the proposed development.

1.7 There are relevant development plan policies which are consistent with the NPPF and it is considered that the proposal conflicts with GP35 and RA11 and there are no material considerations that indicate a decision other than in accordance with the development plan.

1.8 It is therefore recommended that the application be **REFUSED** subject to the following reasons:-

- 1 The proposal would result in significant extensions and alterations to the existing buildings which would fail to harmonise or respect the existing rural character and appearance of the buildings in this locality. Furthermore the proposal would result in urbanisation of this rural area, outside the settlement of Newton Longville and the works proposed would cumulatively erode the character and appearance of the locality and the setting of the original buildings. The proposal fails to enhance the immediate setting and therefore fails to comply with policies GP.35 and RA.11 of the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan, the advice set out in the adopted Design Guide "the conversion of traditional farm buildings", and fails to comply with the guidance of the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to ensure that proposals recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and to conserve and enhance the natural environment.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The application has been brought to committee at the request of the Newton Longville Parish Council and Councillor Ben Everitt, local Member for Newton Longville.

2.2 The Parish Council supports the re-use of the existing barns.

2.3 Councillor Ben Everitt supports the application on the grounds that it complies with policy GP.35 of the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (AVDLP) and for the proposals compliance with paragraph 118 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states that planning policies and decisions should, inter alia, support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land.

3.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The application site is located on the northern side of Whaddon Road, a short distance to the west of the main part of the settlement of Newton Longville, and relates to two single storey farm/stable buildings set back from Whaddon Road and sited parallel to each other on a north west to south east axis.
- 3.2 The north-eastern most building is a linear barn incorporating a predominantly timber weather-boarded external finish, save for blockwork elements at its south-eastern end, under a pitched, predominantly slate, roof. The southwestern building is predominantly timber weather boarded, albeit with a mixture of brick and timber elements at its southern end, and brick finish to the western elevation. The building is, again, finished under a pitched, slate roof, with a set-back low mono-pitched roof timber store located at its south eastern end. The two barns are linked by a corrugated sheet and wooden gate.
- 3.3 The area between and around the buildings is predominantly laid to hard standing (concrete) with an access track (predominantly grass) extending southwards before returning to join the access way serving Wyndham Cottage (hardstanding) to the west.
- 3.4 Wyndham Cottage is located directly to the west of the application site, and is a detached two storey red brick dwelling under a pitched, tiled roof, described in the design and access statement as approximately ten years old (permission granted under ref:05/01065/APP and replacing a former fire damaged dwelling on the site. To the north west of Wyndham Cottage is a detached dwelling (Manor Farm) formed from the conversion of a number of farm buildings, with to the north east thereof, a range of utilitarian farm buildings/barns. Open countryside otherwise adjoins the site to the east.

4.0 PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Full planning permission is sought for the conversion and alteration of two existing barns together with an extension to the rear of the building identified as stable block 'B' and measures to have a width of 6.7m matching that of the existing building and would have a depth of 4.5m. This extension would have a matching eaves and ridge height to that of the existing building. A second extension is proposed between the two stable block buildings which would form a 'link' between the two existing buildings. This link element has a depth of 3.6m and a width of 5.4m but would incorporate a flat roof with a height that matches the eaves of the two existing buildings on either side. Both proposed extensions would comprise of materials that match the existing buildings.
- 4.2 It is stated in the submitted design and access statement that the openings within the proposed elevations would remain the same as those already approved previously under application ref: 17/01285/APP. This appears to be mostly accurate with the exception of the a single new opening in the north-eastern elevation of stable block 'B'.

- 4.3 Internally, the proposed converted dwelling would provide 5 bedrooms within the western 'wing' including en-suites to two bedrooms, a separate WC and a family bathroom. These rooms each include a small number of steps leading to a mezzanine above which would be solely for storage purposes. The eastern 'wing' would house the open-plan living room, kitchen and dining room with separate rooms to the north for a study and utility room.
- 4.4 A 'kitchen garden' to include vegetable boxes is proposed to the north of stable block 'B' whilst a natural swimming pool is proposed to the north of stable block 'A'. This natural swimming pool would be created by using soft landscaping to surround the pool as opposed to the existing concrete hardstanding. Additional native hedging is proposed along the eastern and southern boundary of the application site.
- 4.5 Two parking spaces are shown as being provided at the front of the proposed dwelling.
- 4.6 The first floor window in the eastern elevation of Wyndham Cottage is proposed to be blocked up to prevent overlooking of the proposed dwelling. This window would be replaced by an enlarged dormer style window in the principal elevation, facing away from the barns.

5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 5.1 02/03387/APP - Conversion of existing barn and stables to create one dwelling – Approved
- 5.2 05/01065/APP – Erection of replacement dwelling with detached car port – Approved
- 5.3 09/01916/APP - Conversion of car port to create playroom – Approved
- 5.4 17/01285/APP - Conversion and alteration of existing buildings to create a detached dwelling – Approved
- 5.5 17/04683/APP - Demolition, extension, alteration and conversion of existing buildings to create a detached dwelling with access, parking and amenity space, together with alterations to Wyndham Cottage – Refused – Appeal not yet determined

6.0 PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS

- 6.1 Newton Longville Parish Council has confirmed that they support the application. The PC has visited the site and welcomes the conversion and re-use of the existing barns. Whilst treated as agricultural, the most recent use was for the RSPCA rescue centre.
- 6.2 If the planning authority is minded to refuse the application then the PC asks that the application is considered by the Development Management Committee.

7.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 7.1 AVDC Highway Engineer - Noted that the vehicular access was approved under previous application ref:17/01285/APP and as such has no comments to make.
- 7.2 AVDC Ecologist – No objection
- 7.3 BPA Pipelines – Not in zone of interest.

7.4 Buckingham and River Ouzel Drainage Board – No comments to make.

8.0 REPRESENTATIONS

8.1 No representations have been received on this application.

9.0 EVALUATION

a) The planning policy position and the principle of conversion for residential use.

9.1 Members are referred to the Overview Report before them in respect of providing the background information to the Policy. The starting point for decision making is the development plan, i.e. the adopted Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (and any 'made' Neighbourhood Plans as applicable). S38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) are both important material considerations in planning decisions. Neither change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making but policies of the development plan need to be considered and applied in terms of their degree of consistency with the NPPF.

9.2 Newton Longville has a designated neighbourhood area but does not have a 'made' neighbourhood plan.

9.3 A number of general policies of the AVDLP are considered to be consistent with the NPPF and therefore up to date so full weight should be given to them. Consideration therefore needs to be given to whether the proposal is in accordance with or contrary to these policies. Those of relevance are GP.8, GP.24, GP.35 and GP38 – GP.40.

9.4 The application site is located in the open countryside, outside a defined settlement. Policy RA11 of the AVDLP advises that outside settlements, the Council will endorse the re-use of buildings subject to a number of criteria to form dwellings if a commercial re-use of the building is proven to be unviable or unsuccessful. However, this policy pre-dates the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which does not require an economic use to be considered first before a residential use. Consequently, this aspect of Policy RA11 is not entirely consistent with the Framework.

b) Whether the proposal would constitute a sustainable form of development.

9.5 The most up to date national policy is set out in the NPPF published in July 2018. At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11) in both plan-making and decision-taking.

9.6 The NPPF states in paragraph 8 that there are three objectives to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental, which are interdependent and need to

be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives).

- 9.7 These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in this Framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area (paragraph 9).
- 9.8 The Government's view of what "sustainable development" means in practice is to be found in paragraphs 7 to 211 of the NPPF. Paragraph 12 states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.
- 9.9 The presumption in favour of sustainable development in decision-taking is explained at paragraph 11 of the NPPF. Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 9.10 For decision-taking this means:
- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
 - d) 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 proposed⁶; 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.
- 9.11 Policy RA11 also requires that buildings to be converted are of permanent and substantial construction, do not involve major reconstruction or significant extensions and should respect the character of the building and its setting. These aims closely align with the overarching objectives of the Framework, to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the

different objectives). Furthermore, the NPPF advises that planning decisions should contribute to the natural and local environment by amongst matters recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and should therefore be afforded material weight in the assessment of this application. Similarly, they are broadly consistent with one of the special circumstances cited in paragraph 79 of the Framework, that where development would re-use redundant or disused buildings, it should also enhance its immediate setting.

- 9.12 Paragraph 78 of the NPPF states that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support local services. Paragraph 79 states that planning decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the identified circumstances apply which includes inter alia where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting.
- 9.13 With regard to the requirement in Policy RA11 for a commercial use to be considered first, no evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that an attempt to market the property has been made, however, the NPPF imposes no presumption in favour of commercial re-use (para 79), and appeal decisions have accepted that this part of the policy does not accord with the NPPF. In view of this, it is considered that a residential conversion is acceptable in principle.
- 9.14 Turning to the second part of policy RA11 relating to the extent of rebuilding, extension and alterations, the majority of the conversions of both buildings can be achieved without substantial re-building of the main bodies of the buildings.
- 9.15 In this instance there are a number of new works and rebuilding proposed indicated in the submitted design and access statement including:
- Single storey rear extension to stable block 'B';
 - Single storey 'link' extension connecting the two buildings;
 - All glazing to be triple-glazed where practical;
 - Underfloor heating;
 - Rainwater harvesting;
 - Re-instatement of soft landscaping;
 - The buildings would be timber clad of a similar colour to the current barn cladding. Similarly slate roof tiles will be used to match those existing.
- 9.16 The council's 'Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings' Design Guide states on page 11 that the council will require the submission of a full structural survey and condition report

from an appropriately qualified professional. The report should include an assessment of the extent of which works or repairs are necessary and the amount of new structural work needed to enable the conversion. Additionally, the application plans should provide sufficient detail to make it very clear which parts of the buildings are to remain, which parts will be demolished and which parts are new build. Colour shading is recommended.

- 9.17 Further information was sought from the agent with regard to the full extent of materials and structure of the two buildings that would require replacement or refurbishment. A response received on 16 August 2018 confirmed that a structural engineer was consulted (on behalf of the applicant) and that verbal advice was given, but not a written response. It was further stated that, although the full extent of materials requiring replacement is not known at this stage, any materials that do require replacement will be done so on a like-for-like basis. Finally, it is stated that in respect of the structural elements such as the trusses and concrete frame, these will remain unchanged and would be kept visible.
- 9.18 Importantly, it is noted that permission has already been granted previously through application ref: 17/01285/APP and this extant permission, insofar as replacement materials are concerned, is a material consideration in determining this planning application.
- 9.19 RA11 requires that buildings to be converted are of permanent and substantial construction, do not involve major reconstruction or significant extensions. The Design Guide expands further on what is acceptable. It states that conversion schemes should be true conversion schemes retaining the existing structure without significant re-building or extension. Re-building should be avoided, as much of the original structure should be retained as possible.
- 9.20 Consequently, whilst a change of use has already been deemed acceptable via a previous planning permission, there is insufficient information submitted alongside this application to clearly justify why extensions are required to facilitate this change of use, when the local plan policy together with the council's design guide, are clear in that 'significant' extensions will not be considered acceptable. In this instance the plans do not indicate the full extent of re-build or highlight the extensions proposed. Nonetheless, it is evident that extensions are proposed and the written information submitted in support of the application clarifies that whilst, the full extent of materials to be replaced is not known, if required, it would be done on a like-for-like basis.
- 9.21 The applicant argues that the reuse and restoration of the buildings together with the extensive landscaping scheme proposed and removal of hardsurfacing would result in a visual improvement at the site, however this is not considered to be a special circumstance to warrant the extent of works proposed.
- 9.22 Paragraph 78-79 of the Framework states that:

To promote sustainable development in rural areas housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality in rural communities. For example where there are groups of smaller settlements development in one village may support services in village nearby. Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances.

- 9.23 In terms of its broader location, the site lies outside the village of Newton Longville in open countryside. The recent planning permission granted in June 2017 (17/01285/APP) for the conversion of the existing buildings into a single dwelling is material to the application. The principle of development had previously accepted the conversion as sustainable, given the compliance with policy RA11 of the AVDLP and the locational circumstances have not changed to alter this conclusion in relation to this application, albeit there is now conflict resulting from the proposed extensions.
- 9.24 To conclude, it is considered that whilst the proposal for the change of use would be considered sustainable insofar as a previous approval considered the locational aspect of the site to be acceptable, the proposal is in direct conflict with policy RA11 and conflict with the advice contained in "The Conversion of traditional Buildings" design guide and the NPPF, as a result of the extensions proposed, which should be afforded significant negative weight in the planning balance.
- 9.25 The proposal will need to be considered not only in terms of its impact on the localised site and surroundings but also in terms of the wider capacity of the town to accept further population growth, having regard to its impact on the infrastructure and local services. These issues are considered in more detail under the headings below.

Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

- 9.26 The conversion of these buildings would make a contribution to the housing supply although this is tempered by the small scale so that it would be regarded as a limited benefits, especially as a single dwelling has already been permitted at this site.
- 9.27 There is no reason that the site could not be delivered within the next five year period making a contribution to housing land supply.
- 9.28 In supporting the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, paragraph 61 states that within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes).

Build a strong, competitive economy

- 9.29 The Government is committed to securing and supporting sustainable economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. Paragraph 80 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should help to create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt.
- 9.30 It is considered that there would be economic benefits to the scheme which would include creation of temporary construction jobs as well as creating of demand for local suppliers of goods and services from the small increase in the population brought about by the development that would contribute to economic growth. It is considered that these benefits would be limited given the small scale nature of the development.

Promoting healthy and safe communities

- 9.31 Policies GP86-88 and GP94 seek to ensure that appropriate community facilities are provided arising from a proposal (e.g. school places, public open space, leisure facilities, etc.).
- 9.32 Decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places, promoting social interaction, safe and accessible development and support healthy life-styles. This should include the provision of sufficient choice of school places, access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation and the protection and enhancement of public rights of way, and designation of local spaces.
- 9.33 In this instance, the provision of a single dwelling would not require contributions to be made in respect of the above facility provision.

Promoting sustainable transport

- 9.34 It is necessary to consider whether these developments are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised, taking account of the policies in the NPPF. Paragraph 108 requires that in assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be taken up, safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved and that any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree. Paragraph 109 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 9.35 As noted above, Newton Longville is considered to be a moderately sustainable location for development, this application site is however located well outside the main built up limits of

the settlement. The development will be served by a single vehicular point of access off Whaddon Road which has been previously found to be acceptable, ref:17/01285/APP. It was noted at the time of the site visit that a footpath does not exist at this site providing access by foot to the main settlement. The majority, if not all trips, will need to be made by private vehicle. Notwithstanding this, the previous permission is a material consideration.

- 9.36 The AVDC highway engineer does not raise an objection to the proposed access arrangements serving the site subject to the imposition of conditions.
- 9.37 Policy GP24 of AVDLP requires that new development accords with published parking guidelines. SPG1 "Parking Guidelines" at Appendix 1 sets out the appropriate maximum parking requirement for various types of development.
- 9.38 The submitted site layout plan (drawing no. 1725/5-005B) shows 2 dedicated on-site car parking spaces at the front of the proposed dwelling. The council's SPG states that dwellings comprising of 4 bedrooms or more should accommodate 3 off-street parking spaces. The highway restrictions indicate that parking on Whaddon Road would not be feasible. Although the proposal shows a shortfall of one parking space, it is considered that the size of the curtilage together with the size of the proposed driveway could likely accommodate three vehicles. Even if this had to be accommodated in a tandem arrangement, a turning circle is to be provided at the entrance to the site to allow for turning and for vehicles to egress in a forward gear. The total parking provision is considered to be acceptable in this instance when assessed against AVDLP Policy GP.24 and this factor should be afforded neutral weight in the overall planning balance.

Making effective use of land

- 9.39 Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land. Planning decisions should take into account the identified need for different types of housing and other development, local market conditions and viability, infrastructure requirements, maintaining the prevailing character and setting, promoting regeneration and securing well designed, attractive and healthy places.
- 9.40 Paragraph 122 of the NPPF relating to achieving appropriate densities states that in supporting development that makes efficient use of land, it should take into account the importance of the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it.

- 9.41 The proposed scheme would contribute to the housing supply of the District which represents an effective use of the land in policy terms; however, the conflict of the proposal with policy RA11 of development is such that it would result in the introduction of a building tantamount to a new dwelling in the countryside and unsustainable contrary to paragraph 79 of the NPPF.
- 9.42 As such, whilst the proposal would make a limited contribution to housing supply, the proposal would fail to comply with policy RA11.

Achieving well designed places

- 9.43 The NPPF in section 12 states that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
- 9.44 Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area over the lifetime of the development; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. This aim is reflected in Policy GP35 of the AVDLP which requires development to respect and complement the physical characteristics of the site and the surroundings, the building tradition, ordering, form and materials of the locality, the historic scale and context of the setting, the natural qualities and features of the area and the effect on important public views and skylines.
- 9.45 Policy RA11 also seeks to ensure appropriate design treatment for the conversion of rural buildings as does the design guide Conversion of Rural Buildings. Policy RA11 seeks that conversion works should not require major reconstruction or significant extension. The Design Guide expands further on what is acceptable. It states that conversion schemes should be true conversion schemes retaining the existing structure without significant re-building or extension. Re-building should be avoided, as much of the original structure should be retained as possible. Farm buildings are operational structures generally without ornament or symmetry and have a functional simplicity which is part of their appeal. Changes to the roof slope, amendments to the eaves line and the addition of porches or bay windows will contribute to complexity and a loss of original character. Furthermore window and door openings should be kept to a minimum. These objectives closely align with the principles of the Framework to secure high quality design and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.
- 9.46 None of the buildings are listed and the site is not within the conservation area. The buildings to be demolished are not of any heritage significance.

- 9.47 In line with the extant permission, existing openings would be retained where possible. The majority of new openings reflect those already approved previously under the extant permission. The exception to this is a single new opening proposed and the repositioning of a previously approved opening but instead sited within the proposed extension. The extension itself proposes new openings.
- 9.48 It is noted that, in an attempt to minimise the impact from overlooking of the development from the existing Wyndham Cottage, an existing first floor window would be stopped up and an enlarged opening would be created within the principal elevation of Wyndham Cottage to serve this first floor bedroom instead. It is noted that the enlarged window now proposed is a marked improvement over that proposed under the previous application which was refused. This revised element is considered acceptable in relation to design.
- 9.49 Consequently, it is considered that this aspect of the proposal is in line with the advice contained in "The Conversion of traditional Buildings" design guide, as much of the existing traditional agrarian appearance of the buildings would be retained, notwithstanding the extensions proposed. Whilst the extensions themselves are considered unacceptable as outlined above, no specific objections are raised to the design approach sought as required by the NPPF and this aspect is afforded neutral weight.

Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding

- 9.50 Developments will need to demonstrate resilience to climate change and support the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy. This will not only involve considerations in terms of design and construction but also the locational factors which influence such factors. Development should be steered away from vulnerable areas such as those subject to flood risk whilst ensuring that it adequately and appropriately deals with any impacts arising.
- 9.51 The site is not located within a known flood zone. The proposed dwellings would be required to be constructed to modern standards of design and sustainability to accord with current building regulations.
- 9.52 Overall it is considered that the proposed development would be resilient to climate change and flooding and this factor should therefore be afforded neutral weight in the planning balance.

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- Landscape impact

- 9.53 The NPPF at paragraph 170 states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. A principle of this is recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities

within it. Development proposals should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment through protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and geological interests, minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains and preventing any adverse effects of pollution.

9.54 Policy GP35 of AVDLP requires new development to respect and complement the physical characteristics of the site and surroundings; the building tradition, ordering, form and materials of the locality; the historic scale and context of the setting; the natural qualities and features of the area; and the effect on important public views and skylines respect landscape and local character.

9.55 The site is not located within a specific landscape designation and the present appearance of the site is a collection of former agricultural buildings which are considered to positively contribute to the character and appearance of the countryside, albeit there are large quantities of domestic paraphernalia present. The proposed conversion of the buildings would bring the buildings back into beneficial use and complement its setting within the open countryside.

9.56 The existing structures are not considered to comprise a heritage asset and have been concluded to have no heritage merit. The buildings are not listed and are not considered to be buildings that would normally merit listing. However, it is noted that the site is well screened and the new development would not be readily seen by the neighbouring properties to the north, and the site is set back a sufficient distance from Whaddon Road that it would not be considered overtly prominent.

- Trees and hedgerows

9.57 Policies GP39 and GP40 of the AVDLP seek to preserve existing trees and hedgerows where they are of amenity, landscape or wildlife value. There are trees and hedgerows encompassing part of the site, which is primarily on the northern western and south-eastern boundary with a sporadic sprinkling elsewhere on the site. The proposal would retain existing trees and limited hedgerow along the north western boundary and along part of the southern boundary along the access road in to the site. New trees are proposed along the rear (northern) boundary to the adjacent Manor Farm along with additional native hedging along the western boundary where the site adjoins Wyndham Cottage. Additional tree planting is proposed within the site along the southern boundary with Wyndham Cottage, as well as the north-eastern boundary with the adjacent field and the application also proposes a tree-lined driveway, details of which could be conditioned for further approval.

9.58 The landscaping proposals are considered acceptable to retain and enhance existing landscaped features and accord with GP.38, GP.39 and GP40 and relevant NPPF advice and this factor should therefore be afforded neutral weight in the planning balance.

- *Biodiversity*

9.59 The NPPF at Section 15 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment advises at Paragraph 170 that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, among other things, protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or quality) and minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.

9.60 Minimal reference has been made to biodiversity in paragraph 7.1 of the submitted design and access statement which states that bat surveys are being commissioned (although not received at the time of drafting report) and that bat boxes would be incorporated in the façade of the barns, as shown on the drawings. The submitted drawings indicate that a total of 4 bat boxes would be incorporated in each of the outward facing corners of the development. This could be secured by way of a planning condition.

9.61 The council's ecologist has stated that there is not a reasonable likelihood of protected species or habitats being affected by these proposals. Therefore no supporting ecological information is required and there is no objection towards this application.

9.62 The proposal would therefore be afforded neutral weight in the planning balance.

(c) Impact on residential amenity;

9.63 Policy GP8 of AVDLDP seeks to protect the residential amenity of nearby residents whilst paragraph 127 of the NPPF seeks to ensure that planning policies and decisions create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

9.64 The nearest residential neighbour is Wyndham Cottage itself to the west which is located approximately 4.6m from the nearest part of the western-most building. As the existing building, including its proposed extension are entirely single storey, the relationship would not be drastically different from that existing relationship and so it is not considered that Wyndham Cottage would appear overbearing to the occupants of the proposed development. The two dwellings would be further separated by a proposed native hedging which would prevent any overlooking at ground floor level. The rooflights proposed within the buildings to be converted would not have views of windows of Wyndham Cottage as the only first floor window fronting the development is proposed to be stopped up. Equally, the views from the enlarged window within Wyndham Cottage to bedroom 2 of the

proposed development would be at such an obtuse view that it would not be considered to sufficiently impact upon privacy. The two rooflights proposed to serve the en-suites to the master bedroom and bedroom 2 could be obscure-glazed to prevent any overlooking.

9.65 Given the above, it appears that the development could be implemented, subject to planning conditions, that residential amenity to both Wyndham Cottage and the proposed development would not result in adverse harm to occupiers of either dwelling. The scheme proposed would provide good levels of light and outlook. The proposed dwellings would also benefit from private gardens.

9.66 It is therefore concluded that the proposal would accord with policy GP8 of AVDLP and relevant advice contained in the NPPF

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