

Conversion of ground floor of existing barns from general storage to cafe with retail area, including amendments to the lean-to and decking/patio area, and associated alterations at Shoecroft Barn Ablington Bibury Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 5NU

Full Application 25/02960/FUL	
Applicant:	Bibury Trout Farm
Agent:	Andrew P Jones Associates
Case Officer:	Amy Hill
Ward Member(s):	Councillor David Fowles
Committee Date:	13 May 2026
RECOMMENDATION:	PERMIT subject to securing a legal agreement

1. Main Issues:

- (a) Principle of Development
- (b) Design and Impact on Heritage Assets
- (c) Impact on Cotswolds National Landscape
- (d) Impact on Residential Amenity
- (e) Highways Safety
- (f) Biodiversity and Geodiversity

2. Reasons for Referral:

- 2.1 No formal request for a call-in was received by the Ward Member. In discussion with Officers, due to local interest and objections including from consultees, Officers opted to call the application to the review panel.
- 2.2 The Review Panel agreed the request for the application to be considered at the Planning and Licensing Committee, as it was necessary to consider the highways implications of the development in light of Gloucestershire County Councils representations in response to the case. It was also agreed that a Site Inspection Briefing would be undertaken.

3. Site Description:

- 3.1 This application relates to a grade II listed converted stone barn and associated lean-to and linear buildings, located on the north-western edge of the village of Bibury. The buildings are used for office/commercial purposes in connection with Bibury Trout Farm to the south/south-east, with accommodation above.

- 3.2 The application site has been drawn close to the existing buildings, with access to the road. To the north-eastern boundary is the Bibury to Ablington Road and is defined by a drystone wall. To the west is an agricultural field, including a recently constructed agricultural building, and to the south is the Trout Farm and River Coln.
- 3.3 The site is located within the Bibury Conservation Area and the Cotswolds National Landscape.
- 3.4 The River Coln is designated as a Main River by the Environment Agency. The application buildings are elevated above the aforementioned river and are located within Flood Zone 1.

4. Relevant Planning History:

- 4.1 CD.3062 Change of use of barn from agricultural to use as a store in connection with water undertaking. Permitted 1962
- 4.2 CD.3062/A Change of use from barn to dwelling. Permitted 1962
- 4.3 CD.3062/B Change of use of barn into dwelling. Permitted 1962
- 4.4 CD.3062/C Conversion of listed building into dwelling and outbuilding into flat to accommodate staff. Erection of a garage. Alteration of vehicular access. Permitted 1974
- 4.5 CD.3062/D Alterations to and use of lean-to as light industrial. Permitted 1977
- 4.6 CD.3062/E Conversion of listed building to use as living accommodation for the Bibury Trout Farm Manager. Use of most of ground floor as storage. Permitted 1979
- 4.7 CD.3062/F Erection of a chimney stack. Permitted 1987
- 4.8 CD.LBC134/A Erection of a chimney stack and removal of existing flue. Permitted 1987
- 4.9 CD.3062/G Erection of a single unit mobile home for use by the assistant fishery manager. Permitted 1990

- 4.10 03/01448/LBC Conversion of ground floor store into residential accommodation. Permitted 2003
- 4.11 03/01449/FUL Conversion of ground floor store into residential accommodation ancillary to existing dwelling on the first floor. Permitted 2003
- 4.12 09/00809/FUL Conversion of ground floor store into ancillary residential accommodation. Permitted 2009
- 4.13 09/00810/LBC Conversion of ground floor store into ancillary residential accommodation. Permitted 2009
- 4.14 12/02549/FUL Renewal of planning permission 09/00809/FUL to incorporate ground floor store into residential accommodation. Permitted 2012
- 4.15 12/02551/LBC Renewal of planning permission 09/00810/LBC for internal alterations, insertion of windows, change to external door and the demolition of lean-to store. Permitted 2012
- 4.16 21/04793/FUL Change of Use of Shoecroft Barn and historic outbuildings for use as an events venue. Refurbishment and alterations to include replacement of lean-to with Dutch barn extension, erection of entrance link building and garage extension. Alterations to fenestration and reinstatement of historic vehicular entrance. Withdrawn 2022
- 4.17 21/04794/LBC Change of Use of Shoecroft Barn and historic outbuildings for use as an events venue. Refurbishment and alterations to include replacement of lean-to with Dutch barn extension, erection of entrance link building and garage extension. Alterations to fenestration, modern internal floors and partitions, and reinstatement of historic vehicular entrance. Withdrawn 2022
- 4.18 22/02853/FUL Change of use of Shoecroft Barn and historic outbuilding to provide x5 holiday lets, refurbishment and alterations to include replacement of lean-to with extension and garage extension, and external alterations. Permitted December 2022
- 4.19 22/02854/LBC Change of use of Shoecroft Barn and historic outbuilding to provide x5 holiday lets, refurbishment and alterations to include replacement of lean-to with extension and garage extension, and alterations to fenestration, modern internal floors and partitions. Permitted December 2022
- 4.20 23/03980/FUL Erection of a café/gift shop. Permitted 2024

- 4.21 25/00840/FUL Conversion of ground floor of existing barns from general storage to cafe with retail area, including amendments to the lean-to, creation of a decking/patio area, and associated alterations. Withdrawn 2025
- 4.22 25/00841/LBC Conversion of ground floor of existing barns from general storage to cafe with retail area, including amendments to the lean-to, creation of a decking/patio area, and associated alterations. Withdrawn 2025
- 4.23 26/00015/FUL Retrospective car park adjacent to Shoecroft Barn and alterations to access. Pending consideration

5. Planning Policies:

- TNPPF The National Planning Policy Framework
- CDCLP CDC LOCAL PLAN 2011-2031
- EC1 Employment Development
- EC3 All types of Employment-generating Uses
- EC5 Rural Diversification
- EC6 Conversion of Rural Buildings
- EC7 Retail
- EC8 MainTown Centre Uses
- EC9 Retail Impact Assessments
- EC10 Tourist Facilities & Visitor Attractions
- EN1 Built, Natural & Historic Environment
- EN2 Design of Built & Natural Environment
- EN4 The Wider Natural & Historic Landscape
- EN5 Cotswolds AONB
- EN7 Trees, Hedgerows & Woodlands
- EN8 Bio & Geo: Features Habitats & Species
- EN9 Bio & Geo: Designated Sites
- EN10 HE: Designated Heritage Assets
- EN11 HE: DHA - Conservation Areas
- EN13 HE:Conv'n of non-domestic historic bldgs
- EN14 Managing Flood Risk
- EN15 Pollution & Contaminated Land
- INF3 Sustainable Transport
- INF4 Highway Safety
- INF5 Parking Provision

6. Observations of Consultees:

- 6.1 Conservation Officer: No objections (following amendments)

- 6.2 Biodiversity Officer: No objections
- 6.3 Gloucestershire County Council Highway Officer: Objection
- 6.4 Environment Agency: No response received

7. View of Parish Council:

Bibury Parish Council:

7.1 "Bibury Parish Council is frustrated that this application has been allowed so soon after its predecessor with the only changes being to Decking /Gravel.

7.2 Over 100 residents objected to this recently Highways also objected. We strongly OBJECT to this application. We will put our detailed objection on the planning application as I am mindful of the consultees deadline."

7.3 Bibury Parish Council unanimously OBJECT to 25/02960/FUL - Conversion of ground floor of existing barns from general storage to cafe with retail area, including amendments to the lean-to and decking/patio area, and associated alterations - Shoecroft Barn Ablington Bibury Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 5NU

Overtourism

7.4 Bibury Parish Council agrees that overtourism by the Trout farm, resulting high volumes of visitors, is having a negative impact on the local environment, community, and the overall visitor experience, the village cannot sustainably manage and maintain its character.

7.5 This application 25/02960/FUL we understand will be open to non-trout farm visitors therefore we believe will lead to another increase in visitor numbers.

7.6 The Trout Farm already has a large café in its grounds as well as existing extended café facility selling ice cream opposite the main site. The village has another four catering businesses for the public all serving food and drink, Policy EC10 New or extended tourist facilities and visitor attractions (excluding accommodation) (ii) d. is an identified opportunity that is not met by existing facilities;

7.7 9.10.4. *The Local Plan ensures that new tourism development is effectively and appropriately controlled to protect the high quality natural and built environment of the District, especially in the AONB. The term 'special affinity' has been used in order to protect the character of Cotswold towns and the countryside.*

7.8 EC10: 9.10.6. *The area's popularity with visitors is not sufficient justification for the location of new tourist attractions. Any large-scale visitor development will generally be considered to be unacceptable if it would harm the landscape or features of historic interest, or have a harmful impact on the transport network.*

Access

7.9 *The access to Shoecroft barn is on a single carriageway country lane used by rural agricultural vehicles, emergency vehicles and residents, this lane is constantly grid locked and verges eroded by tourist vehicles using the Trout farm main car park which is often full to overflowing in the summer therefore a new café as a standalone destination with traffic arriving will only exacerbate car parking and access to the Trout farm overflow car parks which have been overused this summer, not only creating enormous frustration to residents from Ablington and Bibury alike, but causing great danger to both pedestrians and drivers, contrary to policy INF4 Avoiding severance of communities, also EC10 9.10.6, EN15 the air can be polluted through gaseous emissions through local traffic generation in a conservation area.*

7.10 *The culmination of all these factors has created an unsafe public road with constant conflicts between traffic, cyclists and pedestrian's and cumulative congestion and the negative impacts on residents' movements are severe contrary to INF4 which with this possibility of another cafe facility open to the public from the roadside increasing potential footfall and increase safety risk, more emissions, noise and more frustration to the people who live here.*

7.11 *The nearest fire station is in Northleach and their quickest and preferred route to access Bibury and surrounding villages in an emergency is to use the lane from Ablington into Bibury, this already busy lane (due to Trout farm visitors and car parks) will have an increased traffic flow due to expansion of Trout farm facilities. Gloucestershire Highways have Objected to this planning application.*

POLLUTION

7.12 There are no details of foul water drainage, although Thames Water are now addressing the foul water pollution in Bibury, we understand a substantial increase in foul water from a café of this size would be detrimental to the sewage capacity at the Ablington end of the village, especially with any overflow being so close to the River Coln. If cesspits are to be considered the runoff will be extremely close to both the drinking water aquifer and the river Coln. EN15 10.15.3 therefore need to be designed appropriately and in discussion with the Environment Agency and as a Parish Council we consider there is not enough detail of this important part of the planning application. It is important that there are controls to ensure an adequate and safe water supply for residents.

7.13 Groundwater feeds into both public and private water supplies. These supplies may be affected through pollution and may be depleted through surface water and drainage systems which do not allow for natural infiltration of water through soils.

7.14 While there's no single, universally applicable figure, a cafe could use between 600 to 1000 gallons of water per day. Toilet flushes alone can account for a significant portion of this, with each flush potentially using 5 to 10 litres of water.

7.15 Noise pollution will increase as more visitors come to bigger tourist café facilities EN15 10.15.4 In areas where the community values quiet enjoyment and tranquillity, noise can be similarly detrimental, as can vibration, dust, smell and the intrusion of light and heat. Considering these points, Bibury Parish Council Strongly Object to this application.

- 7.2 They also submitted a "May Day Bank Holiday 2025 - Examples of dangerous traffic situations on the Ablington Road - Sunday 4th May 2025" document and a section of a report regarding traffic issues.

8. Other Representations:

- 8.1 102 third party representations have been received, objecting to the application on the grounds of:

- i. Additional vehicle trips (customers, staff, servicing) on constrained local roads (narrow carriageways, limited footways, pinch points).
- ii. Pedestrian safety concerns on routes with limited/absent footways and conflicts with vehicles/cyclists.

- iii. Increased congestion/queuing in peak periods and knock-on impacts for village movement.
- iv. Parking shortfall/overspill leading to unsafe or obstructive parking and pressure on residential streets.
- v. Potential effects on emergency/service vehicle access during busy periods.
- vi. No parking indicated on the plans.
- vii. Increased noise and general disturbance from additional visitors, vehicles, and outdoor activity.
- viii. Light spill and loss of tranquillity from increased evening/operational lighting
- ix. Noise pollution
- x. Increased litter and general nuisance associated with higher footfall.
- xi. Harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the village's historic character.
- xii. Harm to the National Landscape including effects on tranquillity and landscape character through intensification/commercialisation.
- xiii. Concerns regarding impacts on the listed building and the setting of heritage assets.
- xiv. Potential effects on protected species/habitats and calls for more robust ecological survey evidence.
- xv. Ecological enhancement measures previously included not provided with this application.
- xvi. Trees shown as removed on the site plan (but not mentioned on the application form)
- xvii. Potential for pollution and water-quality impacts affecting the River Coln and wider water environment.
- xviii. Concerns about adequacy of drainage/foul sewage arrangements to accommodate café use and lack of information submitted.
- xix. Overprovision of cafés/retail locally and potential impact on existing businesses
- xx. Inconsistencies in the Heritage, Design and Access Statement and overall poor quality of submission
- xxi. Frustration application was validated given quality of submission
- xxii. Limited changes from the previous application
- xxiii. Proliferation of planning applications submitted
- xxiv. Inclusion of previously not mentioned farm manager's accommodation
- xxv. Concern over site becoming an events venue
- xxvi. Lack of compliance with condition
- xxvii. Erosion of working farm into a solely tourist based enterprise
- xxviii. One business causing detriment to the village without benefits to the village
- xxix. Lack of compliance with conditions

- xxx. Footpath not installed in accordance with condition on application 21/02486/FUL
- xxxi. Potential light spill/pollution
- xxxii. No retail impact assessment (EC9)
- xxxiii. Proposal does not comply with economy policies
- xxxiv. Applications a waste of time and money, and causes distress
- xxxv. Strategic management plan of the Trout Farm required
- xxxvi. Concerns over potential future creep of development

9. Applicant's Supporting Information:

- Ecological Impact Assessment prepared by Darwin Ecology dated July 2025
- Heritage, Design and Access Statement dated March 2025

10. Officer's Assessment:

- 10.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that 'If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.' The starting point for the determination of this application is therefore the current development plan for the District which is the adopted Cotswold District Local Plan 2011 - 2031.
- 10.2 The policies and guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are also a material planning consideration. In addition to the above, it is noted that the Government published a draft version of the NPPF on the 16th December 2025. The consultation period for the aforementioned document expired on the 10th March 2026 and it is anticipated that a final version of the NPPF will be released in Summer 2026. Whilst the draft NPPF is a consultation document, it is considered that the proposed policies within it are a material consideration and must be given a degree of weight at the present time.

Background and Proposed Development

- 10.3 The application seeks the conversion of the ground floor of the existing building into a café with retail area, including amendments to the lean-to and decking area.

(a) Principle of Development

10.4 The proposal would be used in connection with the existing tourist attraction at Bibury Trout Farm, although would be accessed separately. Local Plan Policies EC1, EC3, EC5, EC6, EC8 and EC10 are considered relevant.

10.5 Local Plan Policy EC1 (Employment Development) states that:

Employment Development will be permitted where it:

- a. supports the creation of high quality jobs in professional, technical and knowledge-based sectors and seeks to support economic opportunities which capitalise on the strength of existing academic and training institutions and research organisations;*
- b. maintains and enhances the vitality of the rural economy;*
- c. enables opportunities for more sustainable working practices, including home-working; development will be permitted where it:*
- d. supports and improves the vitality and viability of Primary, Key, District and Local Centres; or*
- e. supports sustainable tourism in ways that enables the District to attract higher numbers of longer-stay visitors*

10.6 Local Plan Policy EC3 (Proposals for all types of Employment-Generating Uses) states:

Outside Development Boundaries, and outside established employment sites, proposals for small-scale employment development appropriate to the rural area will be permitted where they:

- a. do not entail residential use as anything other than ancillary to the business; and*
- b. are justified by a business case, demonstrating that the business is viable; or*
- c. facilitate the retention or growth of a local employment opportunity*

10.7 Local Plan Policy EC5 (Rural Diversification) states:

Development that relates to the diversification of an existing farm, agricultural estate, or other land-based rural business will be permitted provided that:

- a. the proposal will not cause conflict with the existing farming operation including severance or disruption to the agricultural holding that would prejudice its continued viable operation;*
- b. existing buildings are reused wherever possible; and*
- c. the scale and design of the development contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.*

10.8 Local Plan Policy EC6 (Conversion of Rural Buildings) states that:

The conversion of rural buildings to alternative uses will be permitted provided:

- a. the building is structurally sound, suitable for and capable of conversion to the proposed use without substantial alteration, extension or re-building;*
- b. it would not cause conflict with existing farming operations, including severance or disruption to the holding that would prejudice its continued viable operation; and*
- c. the development proposals are compatible with extant uses on the site and existing and planned uses in close proximity to the site.*

10.9 Local Plan Policy EC8 (Main Town Centre Uses) includes:

4. All proposals for main town centre uses should:

- a. be consistent with the strategy for the settlement;*
- b. help maintain an appropriate mix of uses in the Centre; and*
- c. contribute to the quality, attractiveness and character of the settlement, including the Centre, and the street frontage within which the site is located. ...*

7. When considering proposals for main town centre uses beyond the identified Centre boundaries, (in edge of centre or out of centre locations), proposals will be permitted that are:

- a. accessible and well connected to the Centre by public transport, walking and cycling;*
- b. contribute to the quality, attractiveness and character of the settlement and the street frontage within which the site is located;*
- c. maintain or improve, where possible, the health and wellbeing of the District's residents through increased choice and quality of shopping, leisure, recreation, arts, cultural and community facilities; and*
- d. except where the proposal is in conformity with an allocation for main town centre uses elsewhere in the Plan, comply with the sequential test, by demonstrating that there are no sequentially preferable sites or premises to accommodate the proposed development, taking into account the need for flexibility in the scale and format of proposals*

8. In addition to Clause 7 criteria (a)-(d) proposals for retail, leisure and office uses outside of defined centres will be assessed in relation to their impact on:

- a. the vitality and viability of those defined town centres within the catchment area of the proposal; and*
- b. existing, proposed and committed town centre investment in defined centres within the catchment area of the proposal.*

Such assessments should, where appropriate, extend to an assessment of the cumulative effects, taking into account other committed and recently completed developments.

10.10 Local Plan Policy EC10: Development of Tourist Facilities and Visitor Attractions states:

New or extended tourist facilities and visitor attractions (excluding accommodation) will be permitted provided the proposal:

- a. has a functional relationship and special affinity with the historic and natural heritage of the area;*
- b. is well related to the main tourist routes;*
- c. is an identified opportunity that is not met by existing facilities; and*
- d. as far as possible, use is made of existing buildings, particularly agricultural buildings in the countryside, with the number and scale of new buildings kept to a minimum.*

10.11 The supporting text at paragraph 9.10.4 for this policy goes on to say *'The term 'special affinity' has been used in order to protect the character of Cotswold towns and the countryside. Attractions for which there is no special justification for their location in that particular area, will not normally be permitted. The nature of the attraction should rely on its location within the Cotswolds. The A-roads of the District tend to form the main tourist routes.'*

10.12 In terms of national guidance, Paragraphs 85 states:

Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.

10.13 Paragraph 88 of the NPPF states:

Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, new buildings;*
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
- c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and*
- d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.*

10.14 Paragraph 89 of the NPPF states:

Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

10.15 Bibury Trout Farm comprises an established farm and tourist attraction within the village of Bibury. The proposal seeks the conversion of the ground floor of an existing building to a café with an ancillary retail area.

10.16 In principle, the proposal is considered acceptable under Policy EC1, as it would maintain and enhance the vitality of the rural economy. No additional residential use is proposed and, given the functional link to the existing Trout Farm attraction, the development would facilitate the growth of local employment opportunities. The proposal therefore accords with Policy EC3.

10.17 The Trout Farm has already diversified into tourism-related uses, and the proposal is considered to represent a continuation of this diversification of an existing farm enterprise. It would involve the re-use of existing buildings and, given the established tourist activity on the wider site, would not give rise to conflict with ongoing farming operations. The scale and form of development are considered appropriate, with the design contributing positively to the character and appearance of the area (discussed further below). The proposal therefore complies with Policy EC5.

10.18 The building is of solid construction and capable of conversion with limited external alteration. The proposed use would be compatible with existing uses in and around the site and would not prejudice agricultural operations. As such, the proposal accords with Policy EC6.

10.19 The primary use of the ground floor would be as a café, with the retail element limited in scale and ancillary to that use. Bibury does not have a specific strategy and is not an identified Centre. As such, this location is considered not to be 'Out of Centre' for the purposes of Local Plan Policy EC8. The utilisation of an

existing building is considered to contribute to the quality, attractiveness and character of the settlement.

- 10.20 At a national level, the proposal would support economic growth and productivity in accordance with Paragraph 85 of the NPPF, which gives significant weight on the need to support economic growth. In relation to Paragraph 88, the proposal comprises the expansion of a business and further diversification in a rural area through the conversion of existing buildings.
- 10.21 Bibury is located on a B-road and functions as a significant tourist destination. Whilst café provision already exists both within the village and at Bibury Trout Farm, the applicant has identified a need for additional provision, noting that a previously approved café elsewhere on the site is no longer intended to be implemented. The proposal would utilise an existing (listed) building, which is not considered to be adversely affected by the change of use. Accordingly, the proposal is considered to comply with Policy EC10.
- 10.22 The significant tourism pressures affecting Bibury are acknowledged, with traffic and parking issues representing an established concern within the village and subject to ongoing involvement from Gloucestershire County Council. However, the proposal is considered likely to predominantly serve existing visitors, providing small-scale facilities that would encourage visitors to remain longer and better manage their experience of the village, rather than materially increasing overall visitor numbers. In this regard, and notwithstanding the detailed consideration of traffic and parking impacts set out below, it is noted that an established car park opposite the building is authorised for use as overflow parking for the Trout Farm and in practice also serves visitors to Bibury more generally. On this basis, the proposal is unlikely to result in significant additional vehicle movements, with many café users anticipated to already be visiting the village.
- 10.23 The proposal is therefore considered to support the principles of sustainable tourism by making efficient use of existing infrastructure, reusing an existing building without encroachment into the wider countryside, and enhancing visitor facilities in a manner proportionate to its rural context. Taken together, these factors are considered to respect the character and appearance of the countryside and to accord with the objectives of Paragraph 88 of the Framework.
- 10.24 A pedestrian route between the car park and the Trout Farm has now been provided, with access available to the front of the site.

- 10.25 It is recognised that the site is not centrally located within the village and is not well served by public transport. However, Paragraph 89 of the Framework acknowledges that sites to meet rural business needs may need to be located adjacent to or beyond settlement boundaries. The impact on the local highway network is addressed in the highways section below.
- 10.26 Overall, the proposal is considered acceptable in principle, supported by relevant Local Plan policies and the NPPF.

(b) Design and Impact on Heritage Assets

- 10.27 Shoecroft Barn is a grade II listed building. The Local Planning Authority is therefore statutorily required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the building, its setting, and any features of special architectural or historic interest it may possess, in accordance with Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (for planning permission).
- 10.28 The barn also lies within the designated Bibury Conservation Area, wherein the Local Planning Authority is statutorily obliged to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area, in accordance with Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 10.29 Considerable weight and importance must be given to the aforementioned legislation.
- 10.30 Local Plan Policy EN1 seeks where appropriate, to promote the protection, conservation and enhancement of the historic and natural environment.
- 10.31 Local Plan Policy EN2 states that *"Development will be permitted which accords with the Cotswold Design Code. Proposals should be of design quality that respects the character and distinctive appearance of the locality."*
- 10.32 Local Plan Policy EN10 states:

"1 In considering proposals that affect a designated heritage asset or its setting, great weight will be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.

2 Development proposals that sustain and enhance the character, appearance and significance of designated heritage assets (and their settings), and that put them to viable uses, consistent with their conservation, will be permitted.

3 Proposals that would lead to harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset or its setting will not be permitted, unless a clear and convincing justification of public benefit can be demonstrated to outweigh that harm. Any such assessment will take account, in the balance of material considerations:

- The importance of the asset;*
- The scale of harm; and*
- The nature and level of the public benefit of the proposal."*

10.33 Local Plan Policy EN11 states:

"Development proposals, including demolition, that would affect Conservation Areas and their settings, will be permitted provided they:

- a. Preserve and where appropriate enhance the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area in terms of siting, scale, form, proportion, design, materials and the retention of positive features;*
- b. Include hard and soft landscape proposals, where appropriate, that respect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;*
- c. Will not result in the loss of open spaces, including garden areas and village greens, which make a valuable contribution to the character and/or appearance, and/or allow important views into or out of the Conservation Area.*
- d. Have regard to the relevant Conservation Area appraisal (where available); and*
- e. do not include internally illuminated advertisement signage unless the signage does not have an adverse impact on the Conservation Area or its setting."*

10.34 Local Plan Policy EN13 states that proposals to extend or alter non-domestic heritage assets that have already been converted will be permitted where the works would preserve the significance of the asset, its setting and/or the character or the appearance of the surrounding landscape in a manner that is proportionate to the significance of the asset.

10.35 Section 12 of the NPPF reiterates that achieving well designed and high-quality places and buildings is importance.

10.36 Section 16 of the NPPF seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment. Paragraph 210 states that Local Authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and

distinctiveness. Paragraph 212 states that when considering the impact of the proposed works on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 213 states that any harm to or loss of significance, through alteration or development within the asset's setting should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 215 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

- 10.37 The main threshing barn forms part of the Bibury Trout Farm complex and contributes to the character of the site through its historic agricultural form and fabric. The barn has previously been converted to non-agricultural uses, with a number of unsympathetic modern alterations already present. As such, while the building retains heritage value as a listed structure, its sensitivity to change has been reduced in certain areas.
- 10.38 The proposal involves the conversion of the ground floor of the barn to a café with ancillary retail use in connection with the established use of the site as Bibury Trout Farm. The change of use would not result in the loss of an historic agricultural function and would provide a viable use that supports the ongoing maintenance and use of the listed building. The principle of conversion is therefore considered reasonable.
- 10.39 The proposals include the compartmentalisation of the ground and first floor. The removal of the modern stair with two new openings in the historic western gable considered acceptable. The other physical works to the threshing barn appear to involve alterations to modern fabric, and are considered uncontentious.
- 10.40 The western lean-to is a modern and unsympathetic addition which makes a limited contribution to the overall significance of the listed building. The proposed alterations to this element, including raising the roof by approximately 30cm, would not materially alter its character or compete with the principal barn and are therefore considered acceptable.
- 10.41 The proposed link between the lean-to and rear shelter shed has been reduced in size from that originally proposed. This aspect is now considered to be deferential and subordinate, and reducing the awkward roof junctions. The Conservation Officer has confirmed this aspect is now considered reasonable.

- 10.42 Regarding the shelter shed, this would remain an open, covered external space rather than being enclosed. Amended plans have also omitted the intended concrete floor slab, with the flooring to now be renovated. The impact on the shelter shed is therefore considered acceptable.
- 10.43 To the south of the building, the replacement of the existing steps with wider steps and the introduction of a small terrace area are proposed. The use of dry-stone retaining walls is considered appropriate to the rural context of the site and would soften the appearance of these changes. Overall, this element of the scheme is not considered to harm the appearance or setting of the listed building.
- 10.44 Taken together, the proposed works are considered to preserve the significance of the listed building and its setting.
- 10.45 The site is located on the northern edge of the Bibury Conservation Area. The Bibury Conservation Area Statement does not identify the site itself as being of particular significance beyond the presence of the listed building. The land in and around the site has a managed and man-made appearance, with a character that differs from the historic core of the village
- 10.46 The proposal utilises the existing barn, with the alterations subservient to the principal barn and of a design that respects the character and appearance of the site. Given the significance of the barn is considered to be preserved, the contribution this makes to the Conservation Area is would likewise be preserved. Accordingly, it is considered that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 10.47 The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Local Plan Policies EN2, EN10, EN11, and EN13, and NPPF Sections 12 and 16.

(c) Impact on the Cotswolds National Landscape

- 10.48 The site is located within the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly known as the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). Section 85(A1) of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 (as amended by Section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023) states that relevant authorities have a duty to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty.

- 10.49 Local Plan Policy EN1 states that new development will, where appropriate, promote the protection, conservation and enhancement of the historic and natural environment by:
- a. ensuring the protection and enhancement of existing natural and historic environmental assets and their settings in proportion with the significance of the asset;
 - b. contributing to the provision and enhancement of multi-functioning green infrastructure;
 - c. addressing climate change, habitat loss and fragmentation through creating new habitats and the better management of existing habitats;
 - d. seeking to improve air, soil and water quality where feasible; and
 - e. ensuring design standards that complement the character of the area and the sustainable use of the development.
- 10.50 Local Plan Policy EN4 states that development will be permitted where it does not have a significant detrimental impact on the natural and historic landscape (including the tranquillity of the countryside) of Cotswold District or neighbouring areas, and that proposals will take account of landscape and historic landscape character, visual quality and local distinctiveness. They will be expected to enhance, restore and better manage the natural and historic landscape, and any significant landscape features and elements, including key views, the setting of settlements, settlement patterns and heritage assets.
- 10.51 Local Plan Policy EN5 Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) states that in determining development proposals within the AONB or its setting, the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape, its character and special qualities will be given great weight.
- 10.52 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by *'protecting and enhancing valued landscapes'* and *'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside'*.
- 10.53 Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states that *'great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in ... National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.'*
- 10.54 The site is located on the edge of the village and forms part of a transitional area that relates more closely to the built form and infrastructure of Bibury than to the open countryside beyond. The immediate context is influenced by a

range of built and man-made features, including a Thames Water pumping station and car park to the north, a large agricultural building to the west, and managed ponds to the south. As such, the site is experienced within a modified landscape context that is distinct from the more rural character of the surrounding National Landscape.

- 10.55 The proposed development would not result in a significant change to the character or appearance of the site. The principal barn already has a quasi-residential appearance, and vehicles are currently present within and around the site. The proposed external café use would be oriented toward the village, rather than outward into the surrounding landscape, thereby limiting its visual and experiential impact on the wider National Landscape.
- 10.56 The need for external lighting is considered limited, as café use would primarily occur during daylight hours. Nevertheless, recognising the importance of tranquillity and dark skies within the National Landscape, a planning condition restricting the extent and operation of external lighting is recommended to ensure that any potential impact is appropriately controlled.
- 10.57 Overall, the proposal is considered not to have an adverse impact on the intrinsic qualities, character or natural beauty of this part of the National Landscape.
- 10.58 Concerns have been raised regarding potential noise impacts, including from amplified music. While cafés are not generally associated with significant noise generation of this nature, it is acknowledged that uncontrolled noise could affect the tranquillity of the area and nearby residential amenity. As a precautionary measure, a condition restricting amplified music is recommended.
- 10.59 Subject to the recommended conditions, the proposal is considered to conserve the landscape character and scenic beauty of the National Landscape and therefore complies with Local Plan Policies EN4 and EN6.

(d) Impact on Residential Amenity

- 10.60 Local Plan Policy EN2 requires development to accord with the design code, which contained guidance on impacts on residential amenity.
- 10.61 Local Plan Policy EN15 states that:

Development will be permitted that will not result in unacceptable risk to public health or safety, the natural environment or the amenity of existing land uses through:

*a. pollution of the air, land, surface water, or ground water sources; and/or
b. generation of noise or light levels, or other disturbance such as spillage, flicker, vibration, dust or smell.*

- 10.62 The proposed development relates to the conversion of the ground floor to café use. The planning history supports the lawful use of the first and second floor as lawfully residential, which aligns with the agent's assertion of a managers flat. Mixed-use arrangements with residential accommodation located above or adjacent to commercial uses, including cafés, are common in built-up areas and are not inherently incompatible. Café use would be expected to operate primarily during daytime hours. Given the potential presence of residential accommodation above, a condition restricting the hours of operation is recommended in order to safeguard residential amenity.
- 10.63 The barn is located within an active area of Bibury Trout Farm, where non-residents are already present, and there is limited scope for private external amenity space associated with the upper floors. Future occupiers would reasonably expect a degree of activity associated with the site and its surroundings. In this context, the proposed café use is not considered to result in an unacceptable impact on the amenity of any occupants of the building.
- 10.64 Concerns have also been raised regarding the potential for noise impacts on nearby residents, including those more central within Bibury/Arlington, particularly from music and customer activity. A condition restricting amplified music is recommended in order to prevent adverse impacts. With regard to general customer noise, given the separation distances to nearby dwellings and the existing levels of activity and background noise within Bibury, the proposal is not considered likely to give rise to unacceptable harm to residential amenity.
- 10.65 The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the residential amenity considerations of Local Plan Policies EN2 and EN15.

(e) Highways Safety

- 10.66 Local Plan Policy INF4 states that development will be permitted that provides safe and suitable access and has regard, where appropriate, to the Manual for Gloucester Streets.

10.67 Local Plan Policy INF5 states that development will provide residential and non-residential vehicle parking where there is clear and compelling evidence that such provision is necessary to manage the local road network.

10.68 Section 9 of the NPPF promotes sustainable transport. Paragraph 115 of the NPPF states that in applications for development, it should be ensured that:

a) sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location;

b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;

c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code; and

d) 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 through a vision-led approach.

10.69 Paragraph 116 states:

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, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.

10.70 It is recognised that traffic and parking within Bibury are significant and longstanding issues, arising primarily from the village's popularity as a tourist destination. Temporary traffic management measures are currently in place, including restrictions on parking and large coaches, but congestion and visitor pressures remain a concern for residents. Objections to the proposal have raised concerns regarding additional traffic movements and pedestrian safety, particularly in relation to the car park to the north of the site and its interaction with the village road network.

10.71 The car park to the north of the site was originally approved as an overflow facility for Bibury Trout Farm and continues to be operated by the business. While its use is not formally restricted, it functions in practice as a key parking area for visitors to both the Trout Farm and the village. The car park has capacity for approximately 150 vehicles.

10.72 A café use outside the centre of a settlement would typically be expected to generate vehicle trips. However, given the exceptional level of tourism within Bibury and the site's immediate proximity to the principal visitor car park, it is

anticipated that the primary users of the café would be existing visitors to the village or the Trout Farm. On this basis, the proposal is considered more likely to result in the reassignment of trips and an extension of visitor dwell time, rather than generating a significant number of new vehicle movements.

- 10.73 While the proposal would place additional demand on the adjacent car park, this must be considered in the context of the car park's original purpose as an overflow facility for the Trout Farm. Given the floorspace proposed (internal and external), Appendix F of the Local Plan indicates a parking requirement of approximately 15 spaces, which could be accommodated within the existing provision. In addition, the agent has advised that the conversion is proposed as an alternative to the erection of an alternative café/gift shop (23/03980/FUL). While this is smaller in size than the current proposal, by restricting the erection of this, it would reduce overall additional parking requirement.
- 10.74 The Highway Authority has raised concerns regarding the potential for the café to become a destination in its own right and the absence of a formal traffic impact assessment. While these concerns are noted, it is considered that a significant proportion of visitors to Bibury already park in the car park opposite the site. For these users, visiting the café would not result in additional vehicular movements or the need to walk along the highway network. Conversely, visitors parking in the village centre have alternative cafés available closer to those parking locations.
- 10.75 In order to ensure that the traffic impacts remain limited and predictable, it is considered reasonable and necessary to restrict the use of the ground floor to a café with ancillary retail only, excluding other potential Use Class E activities which could give rise to different traffic and parking characteristics.
- 10.76 In addition to visitors, there would be some traffic generated from staff, deliveries and similar. The existing access is considered suitable for these traffic movements. While not within the site boundaries, there is existing parking utilised by staff of the Trout Farm, along with the aforementioned car park. While these would result in additional traffic movements, given the expected staff numbers (10), these traffic movements are considered not to result in unacceptable impact on highway safety, nor the residual cumulative impacts on the road network as a result of the proposed development being severe.
- 10.77 In the absence of clear evidence from the Highway Authority demonstrating that the proposal would result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or that the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe, it is not considered that the application could be reasonably refused on highways

grounds. The proposal therefore accords with Local Plan Policies INF4 and INF5 and Paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

(f) Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 10.78 This application is accompanied by an Ecological Impact Assessment which has assessed the site and surrounds for the presence of bats and other protected species. The aforementioned report identified that the main barn (above ground floor level) was of high suitability for roosting bats, and that the other sections were of negligible suitability. As the proposed works would not impact features suitable for roosting bats, the Biodiversity Officer has advised no further surveys are required in this instance. They have advised that the mitigations recommended within sections 6.10 to 6.14 of the EcIA to safeguard bats are accorded with, and a condition is recommended.
- 10.79 The proposal may affect nesting swallows, with recommendations to safeguard birds and to compensate for the loss of nests provided. Conditions to secure suitable enhancement of the site have also been provided.
- 10.80 Given the potential for bats, and potential increases in pressure to add external lighting, it is considered that a condition restricting external lighting is also attached.
- 10.81 It is noted that third party comments have been received regarding wildlife in the area, including river. Whilst these are noted, the proposal is considered to affect these habitats given the limited physical works involved and existing activity on the wider site.
- 10.82 The Biodiversity Officers raises no objection to the application. It is considered that the proposal accords with Local Plan Policy EN8.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 10.83 While every grant of planning permission in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the biodiversity gain condition, commencement and transitional arrangements, as well as exemptions, mean that certain permissions are not subject to biodiversity net gain. The red site boundary is constrained closely to the built form of the development, and as such is considered that the area of habitat affected directly would be *de minimis* and therefore exempt from BNG.

(g) Flooding and Drainage

- 10.84 The application site is located within a Flood Zone 1 which is the lowest designation of Flood Zone and one in which new holiday let development can be acceptable in principle. Notwithstanding this, the site is located adjacent to the River Coln, which is designated as a Main River by the Environment Agency. The River Coln and land to its south fall within a Flood Zone 3.
- 10.85 The proposed development will not result in a limited increase in the amount of built development on the site. Whilst the Drainage Engineer and Environment Agency did not comment on this application, they raised no objections to the previous application the impacts of which remain the same.
- 10.86 Concerns were raised in regard to the lack of details regarding drainage. Surface water drainage will be covered by a condition; however, the sewage would be connected to the mains. The agent has advised the building has been connected to the mains, and ensuring suitable capacity would be within the remit of Thames Water.
- 10.87 It is considered that the proposed development can be undertaken without having an unacceptable impact on flooding or drainage in accordance with Local Plan Policy EN14 and Section 14 of the NPPF.

Other Matters

- 10.88 The proposed development is not liable for a charge under the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 (as amended). This is because it is less than 100m² of new build that does not result in the creation of a dwelling, and therefore benefits from Minor Development Exemption under CIL Regulation 42.
- 10.89 It is noted that not all trees surrounding the site have been annotated on the proposed plans. These are outside the site boundaries and would not be directly affected by the proposal. It has also been advised on the application form that no trees would be affected by the development. As such, the granting of permission for the proposed development is considered not to grant the removal of said trees.

11. Conclusion:

- 11.1 The proposal is considered to comply with Local Plan Policies and material considerations. To ensure that the alternative café/gift shop is not erected, thus

ensuring compliance with Local Plan Policy EC10 and reducing parking pressures, securing a legal agreement to ensure both proposals cannot be constructed is recommended. The recommendation is therefore for permission, subject to securing a legal agreement.

12. Proposed Conditions:

1. The development shall be started by 3 years from the date of this decision notice.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawing number(s):

1621/500 REV C; 1621/501 REV B; and 1621/502 REV B

Reason: For purposes of clarity and for the avoidance of doubt, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), the ground floor of the building hereby permitted shall be used only as a café (Use Class E(b)) with an ancillary retail area not exceeding 40 sqm (Use Class E(a)), and for no other purpose (including any other use within Use Class E).

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to ensure that the traffic and parking impacts remain limited and predictable, having regard to Local Plan Policies INF4 and INF5 and the NPPF.

4. The premises, including patio area and open sided single-storey structures, shall not be open to customers outside the following hours:
08:00 to 16:00 on any day.

Reason: To safeguard residential amenity and the tranquillity of the National Landscape, having regard to Local Plan Policies EN15, EN4 and the NPPF.

5. No amplified music or amplified speech shall be played within the premises or any external area associated with the development, and no external loudspeakers (including within the open fronted buildings) shall be installed, operated or used at any time.

Reason: To protect the amenities of nearby residents and the tranquillity of the Cotswolds National Landscape, having regard to Local Plan Policies EN15 and EN4 and the NPPF.

6. No external lighting shall be installed on the building or within the application site unless and until a detailed external lighting scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include:
- a) a plan showing locations, mounting heights and light spillage contours;
 - b) luminaire specifications (type, wattage/brightness, colour temperature);
 - c) hours of operation and control measures (timers, PIRs, dimming);
 - d) measures to prevent upward light spill and light intrusion beyond the site.

The lighting shall thereafter be installed and operated strictly in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To protect the tranquillity and dark skies of the Cotswolds National Landscape and to avoid adverse impacts on protected species (including bats), having regard to Local Plan Policies EN4, EN5, EN8 and the NPPF.

7. The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations contained within sections 6.8 to 6.17 and 7.2 to 7.3 of the Ecological Impact Assessment (Darwin Ecology, July 2025 - received 19th September 2025). All of the recommendations shall be implemented in full according to the specified timescales, and thereafter permanently retained.

Reason: To ensure wildlife is protected in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Circular 06/2005, paragraphs 187, 192 and 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy EN8 of the Cotswold District Local Plan 2011- 2031 and in order for the Council to comply with Part 3 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

8. Prior to first use, details of the provision of 3no. compensatory swallow nest cups installed on the building, 1no. bird box affixed to a suitable onsite tree and 1no. bat box affixed to the western gable end of the building shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The details shall include a drawing showing the types of features, their locations within the site and their positions on the elevations of the building, and a timetable for their provision. The approved details shall be implemented in accordance with the approved specification and programme of implementation and be retained thereafter.

Reason: To protect and enhance the site for biodiversity in accordance with paragraphs 187, 192 and 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy EN8 of the Cotswold District Council Local Plan, and for the Council to comply with Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

9. Prior to the construction of any external wall of the development hereby approved, samples of the proposed walling and roofing materials shall be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and only the approved materials shall be used.

Reason: To ensure that, in accordance with Cotswold District Local Plan Policies EN2, EN10 and EN11, the development will be constructed of materials of a type, colour, texture and quality that will be appropriate to the site and its surroundings.

10. The timber cladding shall not be treated in any way and shall be left to weather and silver naturally and shall be permanently retained as such thereafter.

Reason: Traditionally timber cladding was untreated, and this method is considered to be the most appropriate, in accordance with Local Plan Policies EN2, EN4, EN5, EN10 and EN11.

11. No new doors or windows shall be installed until details have been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted details shall be as a scale of 1:10 or 1:20, with details of mouldings and profiles as a scale of 1:1, and shall also include details of the final colour/finish.

Reason: To ensure that the doors and windows are designed and finished in a manner which is appropriate to the character of the building, in accordance with Local Plan Policies EN2, EN10 and EN11.

12. New rainwater goods shall be of cast iron construction or a substitute which has been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and shall be permanently retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that the rainwater goods are constructed of a material appropriate to the character of the building, in accordance with Local Plan Policies EN2, EN10 and EN11.

Informatives:

1. The works permitted are as per the approved plans and the details within the submitted Heritage, Design and Access Statement do not form part of the approved works.

2. Please note that the proposed development set out in this application would be liable for a charge under the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 (as amended), however, no CIL is payable as the Cotswold CIL Charging Schedule gives this type of development a zero rate. However, if the nature of the development were to change, you are advised to contact the Council to discuss the requirement for planning permission and CIL liability.