

Dear Review Panel

I am requesting that this application be referred to the planning committee. Whilst at first sight this appears a straightforward application because of the situation concerning Temple Guiting School, the village hall and the recreational land adjacent to it.

During numerous meetings with the Parish Council I have learnt of their desire for this application to proceed. They see a number of advantages of the scheme including the restoration of a traditional Cotswold and beautiful stone barn which is the principal feature of the site. They accept the concerns over visual impact of the development but stress the developers attempts to produce a sensitive design have been successful.

The Parish Council has held a planning meeting which residents attended to review the original plan. This produced a list of 12 significant concerns which the appear in the planning officers report. There was a second meeting regarding Sustainability, Biodiversity Net Gain, Design and Heritage which was welcomed by the Council.

The development is highly sustainable and residents would wish the non-designated Heritage Asset of the Barn to be restored.

Lastly, I realise the above is of little importance in planning considerations but felt that it was necessary to set the scene for the application. I have asked the parish council if there objection could not be overturned would they prefer the development to go ahead and the majority would prefer this development to proceed.

My comments on the planning officer, who I hold in high regard, are as follows.

Residential Development in a Non-Principal Settlement

Under Policy DS3 the development needs to support or enhance the vitality of the local community and the continued availability of services and facilities. It needs to be proportionate and maintain/enhance sustainable patters of development. It should complement the form and character of the settlement and must not have an adverse cumulative impact on the settlement.

This is a small 5 dwelling development and ticks all the above boxes. It is next to a major area of village life – the village hall and the school. The development will both support and enhance the local community by providing increased housing in a proportionate and sustainable manner. It will support existing services. There has been very limited development in the village and to my knowledge no more are planned. This development will support services not only in Temple Guiting itself but also in nearby settlements such as Kineton and Ford, promoting local sustainability. The expected population from this development is around 16 people, based on an average household size of 2.62 people.

The application could not be refused for this reason.

EC6 Conversion of Rural Buildings

The buildings must be structurally sound, suitable for conversion without substantial alteration or re-building. It must not cause conflict with existing farming operations and the development must be compatible with existing uses.

As the application site is not long used for farming, we need to be concerned with structure and suitability. Whilst the barn is not in good condition there is a sufficient structure to be worked on. It can be repaired and converted to residential use although the work will be substantial.

The application could not be refused for this reason.

H2 Affordable Housing

This is a brownfield site and would be expected to provide 40% affordable housing. However the Government's District Valuation Office has assessed the applicant's viability case and has identified that the scheme, as proposed, is not viable to a point of providing affordable housing.

Whilst this assessment has been undertaken in relation to the requirement to include affordable housing within the scheme, it is also relevant with regards to the consideration of the scheme as a whole and desire to ensure the heritage asset of the old barn and the site as a whole within the Conservation Area.

Any proposal which sought to provide a lower level of accommodation, would mean that the public benefits identified above would not come forward, including importantly the beneficial repurposing of the barn.

As there are less than six houses in the development no financial payment is called for. It is considered that it would not be possible to sustain an objection under Local Plan Policy H.

The application could not be refused for this reason.

Design and impact on the Character and Appearance of Temple Gutting's Conservation Area

The site is in the Conservation Area the proposed development must be assessed for its overall impact on the conservation area, not just the site itself. I understand the conservation officer considers the development to harm to the conservation area as Units 1-3 do not follow a typical farmstead approach. Personally I think they do and in any event this harm must be considered to be less than substantial which means public benefit must be achieved to overcome the harm.

The application could not be refused for this reason.

Local Plan Policy EN1 Built, Natural and Historic Environment

This promotes the protection, conservation and enhancement of the historic and natural environment. Protections are in proportion to their significance. Address climate change and seek to improve air, soil and water quality. This policy also promotes sustainable development that respects local distinctiveness and minimises adverse environmental impact.

This development of an all low-carbon schemes in the Cotswold are not currently comparable to this development as they tend to use red brick. This scheme proposed at Temple Guiting would surpass the sustainability specification that is achieved on the low-carbon schemes in the Cotswolds. It achieves an A-rated EPC for each property and an 86% reduction in CO2. The proposed scheme is expected to be an exporter of energy to the grid and also sufficient in the winter months; this is principally due to the PV array and storage.

The application could not be refused for this reason.

Local Plan Policy EN2 Design of the Build and Natural Environment

I believe this development meets with the Cotswold Design Code and respects the character and distinctiveness of the Cotswolds.

The application could not be refused for this reason.

Local Plan EN4 The Wider Natural and Historic Landscape

Currently this is a largely brownfield, degraded mixture of decaying buildings and unmanaged land which has not been worked on for some time. They detract the views of the Cotswolds and give a sense of decay and abandonment on an important threshold into the village. Views are very localised due to intervening vegetation and landform and is only perceived when in close proximity to the site and cannot be seen from the wider rural landscape.

The proposed development would provide an improved gateway when approaching the village from the south and will be visually attractive to users of the Diamond and Winchcombe Way which would have an expectation of seeing attractive rural buildings rather than a dilapidated farmstead.

The development would improve this landscape and I cannot see how it could be refused for this reason.

Local Plan EN10 Designated Heritage Assets

The application involves the restoration and conversion of a non-designated heritage asset (Barn N) located at the entrance to Temple Guiting's Conservation Area. The heritage asset is currently in a dilapidated state, with part of the roof having collapsed. Without intervention, this barn risks further deterioration, potentially contributing to a decline in the character of the conservation area.

The proposed development will involve the removal of surrounding barns, which currently obscure the heritage asset, as well as wider new build proposals that aim to improve the setting of the barn and its relationship to the village.

I understand that the applicant has worked closely with the conservation officer to ensure that the historic form of the building is maintained while allowing for sensitive restoration and alteration. The current appearance of the barn is not sympathetic to its context, particularly in relation to the nearby school and village hall. The restoration works are expected to result in a net benefit for the heritage asset and the overall character of the conservation area.

In terms of public benefits, the restoration of the heritage asset and its enhanced setting are key components of the development. The development will also contribute to housing delivery, which supports local services and facilities, and will improve the aesthetic quality of the area. Furthermore, by securing the future of the non-designated heritage asset and removing the risk of further decay, the development ensures the long-term viability of the building as a contributing feature to the conservation area.

The application could not be refused for this reason.

Local Plan EN11 Designated Heritage Assets – Conservation Area

Under Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the proposed development must be assessed for its overall impact on the conservation area, not just the site itself. I understand the conservation officer considers the development to harm to the conservation area, particularly the design of Units 1-3 which do not follow a typical farmstead approach. I and the Parish Council consider this harm to be less than substantial which means public benefit must be achieved to overcome the harm.

The development's careful design, including a traditional courtyard arrangement, mitigates some of the potential negative impacts so I can't see this as a reason for refusal.

Local Plan EN12 Non-Designated Heritage Assets

This requires a sympathetic design with regard to the significance of the asset. Where possible it should enhance the character of the Non-Designated Heritage Assets.

I and other believe the design to be sympathetic and can not see this as a reason to refuse this application.

Local Plan EN13 The Conversion of Non-Domestic Historic Buildings (Designated and Non-Designated Heritage Assets)

Plus paragraphs 135 203, 205, 208, 209 and 212

To meet this test the conversion must secure the future of the asset. The asset must be structurally sound and the asset must be suitable for and capable of conversion to the proposed use with substantial alterations, extension or rebuilding.

This will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the works would preserve the significance of the asset. Great weight should be given to the significance of the asset.

As stated earlier the heritage asset is currently in a dilapidated state. Part of the roof has collapsed and without work this asset will deteriorate. The developer and the conservation officer have worked together to ensure that the historic form of the building is maintained while allowing for sensitive restoration and alteration. The restoration works will result in a net benefit for the heritage asset and the overall character of the conservation area.

Whilst the current proposal are regarded as a compromise solution and not ideal the alternative is to do nothing. This would result over time the loss of the barn for future generations. I note that most of the barns to be lost are post war and have no heritage status. For this reason I cannot see this as a reason to refuse this application.

I note the comments on the design of units 1-3 but believe the proposed layout reflects both the form and utility of a traditional farmstead while meeting the functional requirements of modern housing. The design of these units is sensitive to the defining characteristics of the landscape, in terms of scale, massing, form, layout using materials in keeping with the village context. The disposition of the dwellings, walling and planting is designed to minimise views into garden areas to avoid perception of garden paraphernalia. I feel that the landscape quality and condition of the site would result, to conserve and enhance the AONB.

The proposed development would provide an improved gateway when approaching the village from the south and will be visually attractive to users of the Diamond and Winchcombe Way whom would have an expectation of seeing attractive rural buildings rather than a dilapidated farmstead. More importantly without sensitive intervention this farmstead would fall into further decline and disrepair adding to an already negative influence in the Cotswold National Landscape.

For this reason I urge you to allow this application to go to Committee

Impact on the Cotswold National Landscape

The site is located within the Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB), and as such, its design and impact on the landscape are of critical importance. The local landscape officer raised concerns about potential negative impacts on the agricultural character and the visual intrusion of the development, particularly from views along the Diamond and Winchcombe Way. However, the site is arguably brownfield, consisting of degraded buildings and unmanaged land that currently detracts from the landscape. The development's careful design minimizes these concerns by integrating the site into the

existing village character, which is made up of dispersed residential clusters surrounded by stone walls and trees.

As I have already said the proposed development will enhance the village's approach from the south, providing an attractive visual gateway for those traveling along the footpaths. The design ensures that the development is sensitive to the Cotswold National Landscape and will not create visual harm. The introduction of additional fruit trees and orchards will further enhance the ecological value of the site and provide a positive contribution to local biodiversity.

I cannot see this as a reason to refuse this application.

Access and Parking

A considerable amount of work has gone into this aspect of the application. GCC Highways had concerns over the use of Mill Lane due to its substandard surface. It requested more information and the applicant has submitted plans regarding resurfacing and additional white lines. To date there has been no reply from Highways.

Subject to Highways reply I believe this meets an acceptable standard.

Impact on Protected Species

I note the comments on protected species and the comments on bat roosts. However the Biodiversity & Countryside Officer comment on 30th September was to find the application acceptable subject to conditions.

Conservation Officers comments

I note the Conservation Officer's comments that this an apparent sprawl of a development. Whilst a more modest development is possible it is most unlikely to happen. Developers have spent a number of years on this application and have done their best to provide an application that whilst it will not be seen as perfect by some do they want the alternative of decayed buildings, overgrown landscapes and a detrimental effect on the approach to the village.

It is unlikely that a smaller bespoke house builder will pick this up again due to the history, cost and extent that a smaller scheme would produce. I have made enquires and understand the smaller bespoke developers would see this as too risky. Whilst this scheme may be seen by some as inappropriate unless action is taken soon I fear that the historic building will collapse soon making it less likely for it to be restored.

What we are being offered are new houses and the saving of a traditional Cotswold barn. Whilst I note the request for affordable housing for a site of this size it is impossible to provide. As the Government's District Valuation Office has assessed the scheme, as proposed, is not viable to a point of providing affordable housing, yet providing another viable scheme is impossible on a site of this size.

I cannot agree that the economic benefits will be short term. These are beautifully designed, well built houses. I have visited the developers site in Lower Rissington and

have seen the quality of the work for myself. The conservation officer says there is no guarantee that the houses will be occupied by children of primary school age but surely there is no guarantee that they will not be.

Whilst I do understand the comments over the sixteen years that I have been involved with local planning I have accepted that the ideal is not always possible and that we have to compromise between the need of our residents, the standard laid down by CDC and the ability of the developers to deliver projects. I believe this application provides a suitable and acceptable project.