

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:	Rebecca McAndrew
Ward Member(s):	Councillor David Fowles
Committee Date:	11 August 2026
RECOMMENDATION:	REFUSE

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 maintained following review of additional transport information submitted after committee deferral.

6.4 Environment Agency: No response received

7. View of Town/Parish Council:

7.1 Bibury Parish Council:

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

7.1.2 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."

7.1.3 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

7.1.4 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.

7.1.5 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.

7.1.6 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;

7.1.7 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

7.1.8 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

7.1.9 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.

7.1.10 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.

7.1.11 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

7.1.12 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.

7.1.13 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.

7.1.14 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.

7.1.15 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
- Transport Impact Assessment dated June 2026

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.
- 10.4 The application was reported to Planning and Licensing Committee in May 2026 with a recommendation for approval, subject to the completion of a legal agreement. During consideration of the application, Members expressed concerns regarding the transport and highway implications of the proposal and

resolved to defer determination to allow further information to be submitted and reviewed in respect of those matters.

- 10.5 Following the deferral, the applicant submitted a Traffic Impact Assessment dated June 2026. The assessment sought to compare the likely traffic generation associated with the proposed conversion of Shoecroft Barn against the extant permission granted under application 23/03980/FUL for a café and gift shop elsewhere within the Trout Farm complex. The assessment concluded that the proposal may generate fewer trips than the approved scheme due to its reduced seating capacity.
- 10.6 The additional transport information was reviewed by Gloucestershire County Council in its capacity as Highway Authority. Whilst noting the conclusions of the Traffic Impact Assessment regarding comparative trip generation, the Highway Authority advised that the principal issue was not the number of trips generated by the proposal but whether safe and suitable access could be achieved for all users. Following review of the additional evidence, the Highway Authority maintained its objection to the development.
- 10.7 Subsequently, the applicant's agent made further representations directly to the Highway Authority, contending that the relocation of the café to Shoecroft Barn would reduce pedestrian movements between the existing visitor car park and the previously approved café location and would therefore improve pedestrian safety. The Highway Authority reviewed these representations and confirmed that they did not alter its position, advising that no supporting pedestrian assessment, survey evidence or analysis had been submitted to demonstrate the extent of any such benefits. The Highway Authority therefore maintained its formal objection to the application.
- 10.8 In light of the additional information submitted following Committee deferral, together with the Highway Authority's maintained objection, the highway and pedestrian safety implications of the proposal have been reassessed and are considered further within Section (e) of this report.
- 10.9 The associated Listed Building Consent application (25/02961/LBC) relating to the same proposed works is also being considered by Planning and Licensing Committee. The Listed Building Consent application raises distinct heritage considerations and is recommended for approval, reflecting the conclusion that the proposed works would preserve the significance of the designated heritage asset. Members are advised that the determination of each application must be considered on its individual planning merits

(a) Principle of Development

- 10.10 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.
- 10.11 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.
- 10.12 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.
- 10.13 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.
- 10.14 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.
- 10.15 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.
- 10.16 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. In principle, the proposal is considered to have a functional relationship with the existing tourist attraction and would support the ongoing operation and diversification of Bibury Trout Farm.

- 10.17 The significant tourism pressures affecting Bibury are acknowledged, with traffic, parking and pedestrian safety issues representing established concerns within the village. Following deferral of the application by Planning and Licensing Committee, additional transport information was submitted by the applicant in the form of a Traffic Impact Assessment. Whilst the applicant contends that the proposal would predominantly serve visitors already present within Bibury and the Trout Farm, and that the development would generate fewer trips than the extant permission granted under application 23/03980/FUL, the Highway Authority has advised that trip generation is not the principal issue in this case.
- 10.18 The Highway Authority considers that insufficient information has been provided to assess pedestrian accessibility and safety, including pedestrian movements along Ablington Lane, pedestrian and vehicle interaction, accessibility for mobility-impaired users, and conditions experienced during peak visitor periods. The application has therefore not demonstrated that safe and suitable access can be achieved for all users. These matters are considered in detail within the Highway Safety section below.
- 10.19 The proposal would continue to make use of an existing building and would not involve encroachment into the wider countryside. In principle, the proposal is capable of supporting sustainable tourism objectives and the ongoing diversification of an existing rural enterprise. However, compliance with the development plan must be considered in the round, having regard to all material considerations, including transport and highway safety impacts.
- 10.20 Whilst the proposal is considered acceptable in principle under Policies EC1, EC3, EC5, EC6 and EC10, the acceptability of the scheme ultimately depends upon whether it can be demonstrated that safe and suitable access can be achieved for all users. This matter is assessed below under Highway Safety.

(b) Design and Impact on Heritage Assets

- 10.21 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).

10.22 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.

10.23 Considerable weight and importance must be given to the aforementioned legislation.

10.24 Local Plan Policy EN1 seeks where appropriate, to promote the protection, conservation and enhancement of the historic and natural environment.

10.25 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."*

10.26 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."*

10.27 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."*

10.28 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.

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

10.30 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.

- 10.31 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.
- 10.32 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.
- 10.33 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.
- 10.34 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.
- 10.35 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.
- 10.36 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.
- 10.37 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.

- 10.38 Taken together, the proposed works are considered to preserve the significance of the listed building and its setting.
- 10.39 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
- 10.40 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.
- 10.41 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

- 10.42 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.
- 10.43 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.

- 10.44 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.
- 10.45 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.
- 10.46 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'*.
- 10.47 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.'*
- 10.48 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.
- 10.49 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.

- 10.50 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.
- 10.51 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.
- 10.52 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.
- 10.53 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

- 10.54 Local Plan Policy EN2 requires development to accord with the design code, which contained guidance on impacts on residential amenity.
- 10.55 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.

- 10.56 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.

- 10.57 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.
- 10.58 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.
- 10.59 The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the residential amenity considerations of Local Plan Policies EN2 and EN15.

(e) Highways Safety

- 10.60 Local Plan Policy INF4 states that development will be permitted where safe and suitable access can be achieved for all users and where development does not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety. Local Plan Policy INF3 seeks to promote sustainable transport choices and prioritise safe and recognisable walking connections for all users.
- 10.61 Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework promotes sustainable transport. Paragraph 115 states that development should ensure that sustainable transport modes are prioritised where appropriate, safe and suitable access can be achieved for all users, and that any significant impacts on the transport network or highway safety can be mitigated to an acceptable degree. Paragraph 116 states that development should only be refused on highways grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

- 10.62 Following deferral of the application by Planning and Licensing Committee, the applicant submitted a Traffic Impact Assessment. The assessment compared the proposed development against the extant permission granted under application reference 23/03980/FUL and concluded that the proposed café may generate fewer trips than the approved scheme due to a reduced seating capacity.
- 10.63 The submitted Traffic Impact Assessment has been reviewed by Gloucestershire County Council as Highway Authority. Whilst the Highway Authority acknowledges the assessment's conclusions regarding comparative trip generation, it advises that trip generation is not the principal issue in this case. The key consideration is whether safe and suitable access can be achieved for all users and whether the highway safety implications of the development have been appropriately assessed and mitigated. The Highway Authority has maintained its objection to the proposal.
- 10.64 The application site is accessed from Ablington Lane, a narrow rural road which serves residential properties, agricultural traffic, visitors to Bibury Trout Farm and visitors to Bibury itself. Ablington Lane does not benefit from continuous pedestrian infrastructure linking the site to existing visitor parking areas, Bibury village or associated visitor attractions. As a consequence, pedestrians are frequently required to walk within the carriageway alongside vehicular traffic.
- 10.65 Evidence submitted during the course of the application demonstrates that substantial pedestrian activity occurs on Ablington Lane during peak visitor periods and that pedestrians and vehicles regularly share constrained carriageway space. The Highway Authority considers this evidence significant because it demonstrates the actual operating conditions experienced on the local highway network.
- 10.66 The Highway Authority advises that the submitted Traffic Impact Assessment does not include:
- a pedestrian access assessment;
 - a pedestrian route assessment;
 - an assessment of pedestrian and vehicle interaction;
 - an assessment of accessibility for mobility-impaired users;
 - an assessment of pedestrian conditions during peak visitor periods; or
 - an assessment of whether mitigation measures may be necessary.
- 10.67 Whilst the applicant contends that the proposal would predominantly serve existing visitors to Bibury and the Trout Farm, and would improve matters when

compared with the extant permission, these assertions have not been supported by a robust assessment of pedestrian accessibility or safety. The Highway Authority advises that no supporting survey work, behavioural analysis or pedestrian movement assessment has been submitted which would enable those conclusions to be independently verified.

- 10.68 It is acknowledged that no personal injury collisions have been recorded on Ablington Lane during the most recent five-year period. However, the Highway Authority advises that collision records alone do not demonstrate that safe and suitable access has been achieved. The principal concern relates to the interaction between pedestrians and vehicles within a constrained highway environment where significant pedestrian activity has been observed during peak visitor periods.
- 10.69 Following the Highway Authority's objection, the applicant's agent made further representations suggesting that relocation of the café to Shoecroft Barn would reduce pedestrian movements between the existing visitor car park and the approved café location and would therefore improve pedestrian safety. Gloucestershire County Council reviewed those representations and confirmed that they did not alter its position. The Highway Authority advised that no supporting pedestrian assessment, survey evidence or analysis had been submitted to demonstrate the extent of any such benefits and therefore maintained its objection.
- 10.70 Having regard to the evidence before it, the Local Planning Authority concurs with the findings of the Highway Authority that insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that safe and suitable access can be achieved for all users, including pedestrians and mobility-impaired users. Furthermore, insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that any resulting highway safety impacts have been appropriately assessed or could be mitigated to an acceptable degree.
- 10.71 In the absence of a robust assessment of pedestrian accessibility, pedestrian safety and pedestrian-vehicle interaction, the proposal fails to demonstrate compliance with Paragraph 115(b) of the National Planning Policy Framework, which requires safe and suitable access to be achieved for all users, and Paragraph 115(d), which requires highway safety impacts to be appropriately assessed and mitigated. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies INF3 and INF4 of the Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031.
- 10.72 Accordingly, the Local Planning Authority considers that the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the proposal would not result in an unacceptable impact

on highway safety and the application is therefore unacceptable on highway grounds.

(f) Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 10.73 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.
- 10.74 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.
- 10.75 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.
- 10.76 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.
- 10.77 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)

- 10.78 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

- 10.79 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.
- 10.80 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.
- 10.81 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.
- 10.82 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

- 10.83 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.
- 10.84 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 would provide a viable use for a listed building and would support the diversification of an existing rural business associated with Bibury Trout Farm. The proposal is considered acceptable in principle and the heritage

impacts, including effects on the Grade II listed building and the Bibury Conservation Area, are considered acceptable and compliant with the relevant policies of the Cotswold District Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 11.2 The proposal is also considered acceptable in respect of its impact on the Cotswolds National Landscape. Subject to appropriate controls, the development would not result in unacceptable harm to the character, appearance or tranquillity of the National Landscape. Residential amenity impacts are similarly considered acceptable, and no objections have been raised by the Council's Biodiversity Officer in relation to ecology or biodiversity matters.
- 11.3 Furthermore, the proposed development is not considered to give rise to unacceptable impacts in terms of flooding or drainage and is capable of complying with the requirements of Local Plan Policy EN14 and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 11.4 However, insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that safe and suitable access can be achieved for all users. The submitted Traffic Impact Assessment does not adequately assess pedestrian accessibility, pedestrian safety, pedestrian and vehicle interaction, accessibility for mobility-impaired users or pedestrian conditions during peak visitor periods. The applicant's subsequent representations have been reviewed by Gloucestershire County Council as Highway Authority but this has not altered its position. The Highway Authority has maintained its objection to the proposal.
- 11.5 Given the objection from Gloucestershire County Council as Highway Authority, significant weight is attached to its specialist advice. The proposal is therefore considered contrary to Policies INF3 and INF4 of the Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031 and Paragraphs 115(b) and 115(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 11.6 The recommendation is therefore REFUSE.

12. Reasons for Refusal:

- 1. The applicant has failed to demonstrate that safe and suitable access can be achieved for all users. The site relies upon pedestrian movement along Ablington Lane, a constrained rural road with no dedicated pedestrian infrastructure, where evidence demonstrates substantial pedestrian activity and shared use of the carriageway with vehicular traffic during peak visitor periods. Insufficient evidence has been submitted

to demonstrate that pedestrian accessibility and pedestrian safety have been adequately assessed or that any resulting highway safety impacts have been shown to be acceptable or capable of mitigation to an acceptable degree.

2. The proposal therefore fails to demonstrate compliance with Paragraph 115(b) and Paragraph 115(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) and is contrary to Policies INF3 and INF4 of the Cotswold Local Plan.