

Item No.	Application and Parish	No. 8/13 week date	Proposal, Location and Applicant
(2)	16/01052/FULMAJ	19.08.2016	<p>Removal of existing agricultural buildings/structure to facilitate the creation of 7 dwellings; including conversion and extension of 4 traditional agricultural buildings and grain silos, and the erection of 3 new build dwellings, two of which will be affordable, with associated parking, turning, landscaping, private amenity space, ecological enhancements, and provision of footway to existing bus stop. Improvements to existing farmhouse; including removal of existing car port, erection of new garage, and remodelling works. Erection of replacement single storey agricultural storage barn.</p> <p>Prosperous Home Farm Salisbury Road Hungerford</p> <p>Mr and Mrs R Kent and Sovereign Housing Association</p>

To view the plans and drawings relating to this application click the following link:
<http://planning.westberks.gov.uk/rpp/index.asp?caseref=16/01052/FULMAJ>

Recommendation Summary: **The Head of Planning and Countryside be authorise to REFUSE planning permission**

Ward Member(s): Councillor Paul Hewer
Councillor James Podger

Reason for Committee Determination: Local Member call-in - housing of this type, quality and diversity is needed in Hungerford

Committee Site Visit: 27th October 2016

Contact Officer Details	
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1. Site History

A duplicate application ref 16/07593/FUL was submitted to Wiltshire Council during the course of the application as part of the footway proposals included land outside of West Berkshire. The application was approved 27 Sept 2016 with the following conditions:

1

The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

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

2

Subject to the conditions below, the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted plans and drawings numbered 140117-01, 11 & 112A as hereby approved.

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3

a) Notwithstanding the details included on the approved drawings, and prior to the commencement of the development of the A338 footway within Wiltshire, there shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority full details of the footway construction and materials.

b) The development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the so-approved details.

REASON: At the time of this decision the detail of the works have not been agreed by the highway authority. The details are thus subject to change and any changes will need to be considered by the local planning authority to ensure an appropriate form of construction with regards to the likely level of use and visual impact on the character of the area.

98/52895/FUL - Re alignment of farm road to south-west of farm buildings – Approved 26.10.1998

82/17166/ADD - Extension to existing steel framed building for use as agricultural implement store – Approved - 09.06.1982

81/15988/ADD - Wooden boards to be erected on posts on boundary fence non illuminated – refused 04.11.1981

81/14554/ADD - Construct implement shed and workshop for agricultural use – Approved - 12.02.1981

74/00116/ADD - Proposed house on land adjacent – Approved - 25.02.1974

2. Publicity of Application

Press Notice Expired: 31.05.16

Site Notice Expired: 21.06.16

3. Consultations and Representations

Hungerford Town Council:	<p>SUPPORT –</p> <p>Comments: The development makes good use of redundant land and buildings</p>
Wiltshire Council:	<p>NO OBJECTION – see planning history section above for details.</p>
Highways:	<p>NO OBJECTION subject to conditions, information and S278 agreement.</p>
Conservation	<p>NO OBJECTION</p> <p>Comments - The proposal does not impact any designated heritage assets. However, it does involve the conversion and extension of several historic barns to residential use.</p> <p>I welcome the retention and re-use of these non-designated historic (redundant) agricultural buildings and therefore raise no objections to the application.</p> <p>The level of windows could be reduced, as some of the barns (particularly barn A) would have an overly domestic appearance.</p>
Trees	<p>NO OBJECTION – subject to conditions</p> <p>The plans provided have identifies trees on the site, but no additional tree information has been submitted, therefore the potential impact was assessed during my site visit.</p> <p>There were some significant mature trees surrounding the site of the property which would likely be affected by the proposed development.</p> <p>Tree information in relation to the impact and subsequent protection of these trees needs to be considered at an early stage of the proposal. Tree related information needs to be submitted inline with the BS5837:2012 guidelines.</p> <p>Additional landscaping needs to ensure that the development will continue to keep the character feel to the area and enhance it in the medium to long term.</p> <p>No objection in principle subject to full tree survey, arboricultural impact assessment, tree protection and landscaping</p>
Archaeology	<p>NO OBJECTION – subject to conditions</p> <p>This application will involve significant works to historic buildings regarded as heritage assets of local interest. The buildings suggested for conversion are of 19th century date and represent surviving examples of traditional agricultural buildings – these are marked as buildings B, C and F in the Design and Access Statement.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that these structures are redundant and that continued agricultural use is no longer viable – if conversion to domestic</p>

use will ensure their long term survival then this is to be welcomed – however, it is possible that they may retain historic building features or fabric that may be lost through the process.

If conversion of these structures is felt to be an appropriate and feasible option in this instance then it is essential that the works do not contribute to a significant loss of character or to the loss of historic information.

Recording condition recommended to ensure that the structure is adequately recorded, and that historic information is not destroyed as part of the development process without record:

Such an approach is in line with paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The level of recording necessary should be guided by the advice specified by English Heritage in Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice (2006). Given the scale of works proposed and the fact that the building has already undergone some alteration, I would advise that recording to Level 1 would be appropriate in this instance.

Environmental Health

NO OBJECTION – subject to conditions
Identified Environmental Health issues relevant to Planning

- Land contamination

Previous uses of the land associated with farming activities are known to have caused land contamination. Clean top soil will also need to be imported to site to provide topsoil. Further investigations should be carried out, and any appropriate remediation undertaken, to make sure the site is suitable for use once developed.

Water Authority

NO OBJECTION - subject to informatives

Waste Management

NO OBJECTION - subject to condition
Highways have requested that the road is offered for adoption by the local authority and that amended plans are provided accordingly. Waste Management concurs.

Fire Service

NO OBJECTION - subject to conditions
Require private fire hydrants or suitable alternative
Gates should be 3.1 metres minimum to allow emergency access.

**North Wessex Downs
AONB**

No comments received.

Public Rights of Way:

NO OBJECTION – subject to informatives
Hungerford Footpath 40 (part of which is shown as a track to the brick kilns on the extract of John Roques map in the Design & Access Statement 1) is to the south of the farm complex. It meets the proposed pedestrian access to the site on the verge of the A338.

There is a field gate on the path at this point, which is not recorded as a limitation & is not authorised. Obstruction of the path is an offence under s137 of the Highways Act 1980. There will be increased

pressure to use the path from residents living at the new development for dog walking, exercise & enjoyment of the countryside etc. This gate should be replaced with a 2-in-1 design (eg entrewire.com/products/bristol-2-in-1) to mitigate that pressure whilst still providing the applicant with security along the path.

We have no objections to the proposed development providing the standard and non-standard Informatives and Conditions are applied.

No further consultation responses received

Correspondence:

No letters received

4. Policy Considerations

4.1 The statutory development plan comprises the saved policies in the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007) (WBDLP), and the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026. The policies from the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 relevant to this application are:

- NPPF Policy.
- Area Delivery Plan Policy 1: Spatial Strategy.
- Area Delivery Plan Policy 5: North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- CS 1: Delivering New Homes and Retaining the Housing Stock.
- CS 4: Housing Type and Mix.
- CS 5: Infrastructure Requirements and Delivery.
- CS 13: Transport.
- CS 14: Design Principles.
- CS 15: Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency.
- CS 16: Flooding.
- CS 17: Biodiversity and Geodiversity.
- CS 18: Green Infrastructure.
- CS 19: Historic Environment and Landscape Character.

4.2 The West Berkshire Core Strategy replaced a number of Planning Policies in the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007. However the following Policies remain in place until they are replaced by development plan documents and should be given due weight according to their degree of consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework:

- HSG1: The Identification of Settlements for Planning Purposes.
- HSG11 Affordable Housing for Local Needs
- TRANS1: Meeting the Transport Needs of New development.
- ENV19 The Re-use and Adaptation of existing buildings in the countryside
- ENV20: Redevelopment of Existing Buildings in the Countryside.
- ENV24: Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside
- OVS5: Environmental Nuisance and Pollution Control.

4.3 On the 5th November 2015 West Berkshire Council agreed to the submission of the West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD), the document is now considered to be at an advance stage of preparation having recently been through a Public Examination. In light of this due weight should now be afforded to the relevant policies within it. The following policies are relevant to this application:

- C1: Location of New Housing in the Countryside;
- C2: Rural Housing Exception Policy
- C3: Design of Housing in the Countryside;
- C4: Conversion of Existing Redundant Buildings in the Countryside to Residential Use
- C6: Extension of Existing Dwellings within the Countryside
- P1: Residential Parking for New Development.

4.4 Other material considerations for this application which includes government guidance are:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) (NPPF).
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.
- Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (adopted June 2006).
- North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2014-2019 (Adopted 2014).
- National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

5. Description of Development

5.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the residential redevelopment of Prosperous Home Farm, to provide 7 no. residential units. This specifically includes:

- the demolition of redundant agricultural barns and removal of hardstanding;
- the conversion and extension of historic farm buildings to form 3 no. new dwellings: The Stedding a two storey, 4 bed dwelling with double garage; The Dairy a single storey, 4 bed dwelling with double garage/cartshed; The Coach House - a single storey 2 bed dwelling with single garage.
- the conversion of a grain silo into a 3 storey, 4 bed dwelling with a single storey 3 bay cartshed/garage;
- the erection of two no. 2 bed, two storey, semi-detached affordable housing units with single garages;
- the erection of a new substantial 5 bed, 2.5 storey country house style dwelling with a single storey 3 bay cartshed/garage;
- renovation and extension to the existing farm manager's dwelling including a single storey double garage;
- the erection of a new smaller block of agricultural barns to accommodate equipment and machinery;
- associated landscaping and ecological improvements
- creation of a new footway alongside the A338 to the existing bus stop
- creation of an enlarged access driveway with passing bays

5.2 The Application Site is situated about 2.5km to the south of Hungerford within the open countryside and the North Wessex AONB. The site comprises the farm yard to Prosperous Home Farm and includes a 1960s farmhouse (which replaced a previous dwelling on the site), 2 no. grain silos, 2 no. asbestos clad substantial agricultural storage barns, 2 no. asbestos clad milking sheds, 2 no. silage clamps, and 3 no. 19th Century farm buildings. The site currently forms part of a wider agricultural holding of some 300 acres

5.3 The site is accessed from a long driveway, approximately 150 metres in length leading eastwards from the A338 into the farmyard and also provides access to further housing to the southeast.

5.4 The site has important historical associations. Prosperous Farm was the family farm of the agricultural pioneer Jethro Tull, the inventor of the first seed drill and is generally regarded as one of the three men responsible for the Agricultural Revolution in the 18th Century.

6. Consideration of the Proposal

The main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are:

- Principle of the development;
- The impact on the character and appearance of the area and AONB;
- The impact on neighbouring amenity;
- Highway matters;
- Impact on Trees
- Flooding and Drainage
- Ecology;
- Other matters.

6.1 Principle of Development

- 6.1.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides that applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The key policies that relate to the delivery of housing within West Berkshire, and are relevant to this application, are Core Strategy Policies ADPP1, ADPP5 and CS1, Saved Local Plan Policy HSG.1, and emerging Housing Site Allocations Policy C1.
- 6.1.2 The housing supply policies are up-to-date in the context of paragraph 49 of the NPPF, as the West Berkshire Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2015 (Housing - January 2016) shows that the Council can demonstrate a five year housing land supply.
- 6.1.3 In terms of the key principles of decision making as set out in the NPPF, the Development Plan is not absent, silent or out of date. Instead the Core Strategy provides an up to date framework for development planning in West Berkshire. The Core Strategy is being consolidated by the provision of a Housing Site Allocations DPD which is at an advance stage and will allocate non-strategic development under the framework of the Core Strategy.
- 6.1.4 The site is located to the south of Hungerford, outside of any defined settlement boundary as defined by Policy HSG1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007. As such the application site falls within the open countryside as identified within Policy ADPP1 of the Core Strategy where 'only appropriate limited development in the countryside will be allowed, focused on the addressing identified needs and maintaining a strong rural economy'.
- 6.1.5 It also lies within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Policy ADPP5 of the Core Strategy identifies that there will be further opportunities for infill development and for development on previously developed land. New housing allocations will be focused on rural service centres and service villages within the AONB.
- 6.1.6 Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy states that new homes will be located in accordance with the settlement hierarchy outlined in Policies ADPP1 and ADPP5. The Policy goes on to state that new homes will be primarily developed on:
- Suitable previously developed land within settlement boundaries.
 - Other suitable land within settlement boundaries.
 - Strategic sites and broad locations identified on the Core Strategy Key Diagram.
 - Land allocated for residential development in subsequent Development Plan Documents.

Exceptions are limited to rural exception housing schemes, conversion of redundant buildings, housing to accommodate rural workers and extension to or replacement of existing residential units.

6.1.7 The application comprises a number of elements covering the conversion of agricultural buildings, new affordable dwellings, extension to an existing countryside dwelling, a new dwelling in the countryside and a new agricultural building. These elements need to be assessed separately under the relevant policies.

6.2 Conversion and Extension of the existing Agricultural buildings

6.2.1 Under saved Policy ENV19 the re-use and adaption of rural buildings is permitted subject to a number of criteria.

- a) the form, bulk and general design of the existing buildings are in keeping with their surroundings; and
- b) the existing buildings are suitable for the proposed new use(s) without needing extensive alterations, rebuilding and/or enlargement; and
- c) the conversion would not have a detrimental effect on the fabric, character and setting of historic buildings; and
- d) the conversion respects local building styles and materials; and
- e) the proposed curtilage of the new development is not visually intrusive or harmful to the amenities of the surrounding countryside; and
- f) the proposed new use(s) would not generate traffic of a type or amount harmful to local rural roads, or require improvements which would detrimentally affect the character of such roads or the area generally; and
- g) the proposed new use(s) would not result in material harm to the environmental qualities of the surrounding rural area; and
- h) the use of the building by protected species is surveyed and mitigation measures are approved by the Council using expert advice.

6.2.2 Under emerging Policy C4 the conversion of existing redundant buildings to residential use will be permitted providing that:

- i. the proposal involves a building that is structurally sound and capable of conversion without substantial rebuilding, extension or alteration; and
- ii. the applicant can prove the building is genuinely redundant and a change to a residential use will not result in a subsequent request for a replacement building; and
- iii. the environment is suitable for residential use and gives a satisfactory level of amenity for occupants; and
- iv. it has no adverse impact on; does not affect rural character and the creation of the residential curtilage would not be visually intrusive, have a harmful effect on the rural character of the site, or its setting in the wider landscape; and
- v. the conversion retains the character, fabric and historic interest of the building and uses matching materials where those materials are an essential part of the character of the building and locality; and
- vi. the impact on any protected species is assessed and measures proposed to mitigate such impacts.

6.2.3 The proposal involves the conversion of four no. agricultural buildings labelled as The Dairy, The Stedding, The Coach House and The Granary. The former three are all Victorian buildings, with the exception of The Granary, which would involve the conversion of two grain silos.

6.2.4 The proposed extensions and the level of re-building and enlargement is considered significant, particularly to The Stedding and The Granary. The applicant's have provided details regarding the historical development of the farm. The original farmhouse and the buildings forming the farmyard as exist today, can be seen on the 1841 Tithe map. Further buildings are seen on later maps in association with a brick and tile works to the south east of the site, which was redundant by 1900. Photographic evidence shows that 'The

Stedding' was larger than currently exists today, although 'The Dairy' and 'The Coach House' appear comparable. Clearly 'The Granary' comprises the conversion and linking of modern two grain silos. It is considered that each building comprises extensive alterations/substantial rebuilding, extension or alteration contrary to policy.

- 6.2.5 The proposed conversions would utilise materials to match that of the existing buildings and is considered acceptable. The Conservation Officer has however commented that the proposed conversion and retention of the buildings is welcomed. The Officer has raised concern that the changes to Barn A (x) would result in an overly domestic appearance, not in keeping with the historic agricultural barns.
- 6.2.6 The site currently has the appearance of a working farm courtyard, it is considered that the conversion to dwellings could if not considered carefully result in a loss of this character and result in a entirely domestic appearance. The proposed curtilage of the dwellings closest to the A338 would be publicly visible due to the open nature of the site at this location and the gently rising topography. It is considered that this could be overcome by the use of conditions, particularly relating to boundary treatments and permitted development rights to ensure that this appearance is not eroded.
- 6.2.7 The existing farm buildings are capable of generating a large number of traffic movements and therefore the use of these buildings as dwelling would not generate any additional traffic over that of the existing permitted use.
- 6.2.8 The application has been accompanied by an ecological survey and proposed mitigation measures. It is considered that this aspect can be adequately dealt with through the use of appropriate conditions.
- 6.2.9 The proposal also includes the erection of a new agricultural barn to the northeast of the site as an equipment and machinery store. It is not considered that the proposed barn is required as a result of the demolition and conversion of the existing farm buildings.
- 6.2.10 Therefore it is considered that the conversion of the Victorian farm buildings is in principle acceptable. The proposal level of alteration and extension of these buildings (including the new garage buildings) is not considered to be in accordance with policy ENV19 and emerging policy C4.
- 6.2.11 It is understood however that the conversion of this building is not in isolation and would as part of the overall redevelopment scheme enable the two proposed affordable units to be delivered. The applicant's have submitted evidence to demonstrate that the proposed new dwellings would address an identified need. Detailed consideration has been given to this element in the relevant section below.

6.3 Proposed Extension and Renovation of the Existing Farmhouse

- 6.3.1 The proposal includes external alterations including the roof and infilling of a currently open area and a new garage building to the existing farmhouse which was constructed in the 1970s to replace the former farmhouse on the site.
- 6.3.2 Under saved policy ENV 24 and emerging policy C 6 relating to the extension of existing dwellings within the countryside, There is a presumption in favour of proposals for the extension of existing permanent dwellings subject to a number of criteria. These relate to the scale of the enlargement being subservient to the original dwelling, in keeping both in terms of design and materials with the character with the existing dwelling; and having no adverse impact on the setting, the plot, local rural and its wider setting or the living conditions currently enjoyed by residents of neighbouring properties.

6.3.3 Therefore it is considered that given the minor nature of the proposed changes, the proposal is acceptable in this regard, subject to other relevant policy considerations detailed in the sections below.

6.4 Proposed New Build Country House

6.4.1 The proposal also includes a new substantial country house to the north of the existing barns, but within the existing area of hardstanding associated with the farmyard.

6.4.2 As set out above, the principle of the proposed development on this site is not established as it is contrary to the current development plan (Policies ADPP1 of the Core Strategy and HSG.1 of the Local Plan Saved Policies) and contrary to the submitted for examination development plan document (Policy C1). The site is not within a settlement boundary and therefore is not infill development. Furthermore Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) excludes land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings from being considered as previously developed land. Therefore as the lawful use of the application site and existing buildings is for agricultural purposes, the application site is considered as greenfield land.

6.4.3 The NPPF identifies a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 14), however footnote 9 of the NPPF excludes Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty from this presumption in favour of sustainable development.

6.4.4 Paragraph 55 of the NPPF states:

‘Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as:

- the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside; or
- where such development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets; or
- where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting; or
- the exceptional quality or innovative nature of the design of the dwelling.

Such a design should:

- be truly outstanding or innovative, helping to raise standards of design
- more generally in rural areas;
- reflect the highest standards in architecture;
- significantly enhance its immediate setting; and
- be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.’

6.4.5 The proposed dwelling whilst is of a high quality, is not considered to be of innovative or outstanding design. Whilst with the conversion of the surrounding buildings it would not be viewed as an isolated dwelling, it would be seen as the creation of an isolated group of dwellings in the countryside, particularly given the physical and visual detachment from Hungerford to the north and Shalbourne to the south. Therefore the principle of the proposed new build housing runs contrary to policy.

6.4.6 The applicant’s have put forward that the proposed ‘Stubwood House’ is required to make the scheme viable and enable the provision of the new affordable dwellings. Therefore the proposal must be assessed as to whether it is not an exceptional circumstance under policy HSG.1 of the Local Plan or C1 of the Housing Site Allocations DPD.

6.5 Proposed Affordable Housing

6.5.1 The proposal includes the provision of two new affordable dwellings to be sited in the centre of the former farmyard.

6.5.6 Under saved policy HSG11 and emerging policy C2, Small scale 'Rural Exception' Housing schemes will be permitted adjacent to rural settlements to meet a local housing need. The application is a joint application in partnership with Sovereign Housing Association, who have confirmed that there is an identified shortage of affordable housing in Hungerford.

6.5.7 Whilst policy sets out that it is expected that rural exception sites will deliver 100% affordable housing, it does allow for some sites where a proportion of market housing may be acceptable where this enables the closing of a funding gap for the delivery of the affordable housing within the scheme. In such circumstances, the Council will require:

- a detailed submission setting out why any open market housing element is necessary,
- how the scale of market housing proposed supports the funding of the rural exception housing and
- why alternative funding mechanisms have not been used, including Parish receipts from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments.
- how that the scheme provides housing for local households in perpetuity.
- a statement setting out the evidence to justify a particular location. The evidence must include details that all suitable alternative sites in the same locality have been considered that might have less impact and/or be more sustainable.
- The development must be designed and developed as part of one cohesive scheme.

6.5.5 The applicant has provided a Viability Assessment with the application. Due to the commercially sensitive nature of the information contained therein it is held confidentially. The Viability Assessment sets out why the scheme is not considered to be viable without the inclusion of the proposed 'Stubwood House', 'The Granary' and the level of extension and alteration to the historic farm buildings. Whilst the viability report and letter from Sovereign Housing Association setting out the need have been submitted, it is not considered that sufficient information has been received to justify the specific location over any other site in the locality. Particularly in this instance in regard to other more sustainable locations.

6.5.6 Furthermore, if a rural exception scheme requires an element of market housing, there is a presumption that the development will have the least amount of open market housing required to help finance the scheme. If open market housing dominates the housing mix, then the scheme no longer qualifies as Rural Exception Housing and will be contrary to policy.

6.5.7 Therefore in view of the above considerations, the proposal is not considered to constitute an acceptable rural exception site contrary to policy.

6.6 Proposed New Agricultural Building

6.6.1 The proposal includes a new single story barn complex to the east of the site. This is required for machinery and equipment storage. It is considered that the large open frame barns to be demolished would not be suitable for this purpose and nor would the existing Victorian farm buildings due to the nature of their former use and their size. The proposals are considered appropriate due to the nature and extent of the remaining agricultural enterprise subject to other relevant considerations and policy as set out below.

6.7 The impact on the character and appearance of the AONB

- 6.7.1 Policy CS 14 of the Core Strategy states that new development must demonstrate high quality and sustainable design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area. It further states that development shall contribute positively to local distinctiveness and sense of place.
- 6.7.2 Policy CS 19 seeks to conserve and enhance the functional components of the landscape character and environment. Particular regard will be given to the sensitivity of the area to change, and ensuring that new development is appropriate in terms of location, scale and design in the context of the existing settlement form, pattern and character. It also requires the conservation, and where appropriate, enhancement of heritage assets and their settings. Area Delivery Plan Policy 5 seeks to preserve local distinctiveness, sense of place and setting of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 6.7.3 The site comprises a number of redundant farm buildings, which are partially visible from the A338 due to their height and the gentle rise in topography across the site. The site is surrounded by open agricultural land to the east and north and well contained, by woodland planting to the east and south. To the south west of the site is Lower Slope End Farm which comprises a former farmyard converted to business units.
- 6.7.4 The closest public right of way (PRoW) is in excess of 200 metres to the south and therefore there are distant views available from public vantage points other than the A338.
- 6.7.5 The proposal will include the extension to the original farmyard buildings, which may potentially be visible in the wider landscape, although it is not considered to be materially different to view of the current complex of buildings currently on site. The proposed new affordable units are to be sited behind the former Dairy building and will be effectively shielded from public view. The significant new building element labelled as Stubwood House, is considered likely due to the height and mass of the building to be seen from the A338, although again will be partly obscured by the property labelled as The Stedding. The proposed extension to 'The Coach House', will be visible, particularly as this currently is a modest building with a low catslide roof. The most prominent elements which will be clearly seen however are the garage buildings associated with the existing farmhouse and 'The Coach House'. Both will be visible from the access with the A338 and will present a domestic approach into the site. The proposed conversion of the grain silos, is not considered to be visible due to its siting, although the amount of new build required to convert the structure in addition to the large garage building, is not considered appropriate to the location. Of further concern is the large curtilages proposed for each dwelling. Those associated with 'The Stedding' and the 'The Coach House' will be visible and the level of domestic paraphernalia associated with the use as a dwelling could be inappropriate in this location.
- 6.7.6 The extent of the new build elements is considered cumulatively to be extensive and taken as a whole will change the site from agricultural into a domestic use not associated with this countryside location. Whilst the proposal includes the removal of the large open framed barns, these are considered to be buildings associated with the open countryside and although intrusive in terms of scale and appearance, clearly appropriate to an agricultural use.
- 6.7.7 Whilst sensitive, low key conversion of buildings to a residential use could be considered appropriate on this site, it is considered that the proposal would represent a significant level of new building of residential accommodation. Such an intensive domestication of the former farmyard would be inappropriate in this open countryside and AONB location contrary to policies CS14, CS19 and ADPP5.

6.8 Highway Impact

- 6.8.1 Policies CS 13 of the Core Strategy and TRANS.1 of the Saved Policies of the Local Plan relate to highways and transport considerations. CS 13 has a checklist of the types of mitigation likely to be required from development that has a transport impact. TRAN.1 relates to how the transport needs of new development should be met through a variety of measures including public transport, pedestrian and cycling provision. P1 of the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document sets out the residential car parking levels for the district.
- 6.8.2 The access from the A338 is via a 150 metre long, single lane width drive. Following consultation responses from Highways Officers revised plans have been received to include an increase in the width of the first 10 metres of the access drive to 4.8metres. The remainder of the drive will remain single lane width with the provision of two passing bays.
- 6.8.3 The A338 is a 60mph road and therefore visibility splays of x are required including an increase in the bell mouth radii (to 7.5m) and have been received as additional plans during the course of the application. It is considered that sufficient visibility can be achieved in both directions, subject to a condition to ensure that visibility is not obstructed.
- 6.8.4 In terms of traffic generation, Highways Officers consider that the proposed residential redevelopment will generate less traffic than when the site was in full time agricultural use.
- 6.8.5 The proposal also includes the provision of a 1.7 metre wide footway alongside the A338 from the site entrance to the nearest bus stop, some 600 metres from the site. The bus stop in the opposite direction of travel is closer at approximately 550 metres away, but also requires users to cross the 60mph A338. The provision of a footway would be secured by a Section 278 agreement, but has not been entered into at this stage.
- 6.8.6 The access drive to the A338 at 150 metres, is too distant for refuse collection purposes and both Highways and Waste Management Officers require the road to be constructed to enable a 11.2m refuse truck turning in the centre of the site. Revised plans have been submitted detailing a swept path analysis to show how a refuse vehicle could turn within the site.
- 6.8.7 With regard to car and cycle parking, it is considered that sufficient provision has been made to accommodate the required standards for each plot.
- 6.8.8 There are concerns about the sustainability of the site. Whilst it is close to the A338 permitting easy access by car, the site is remote from other settlements. There is a public bus service which operates along the A338 between Hungerford, Marlborough and Great Bedwyn, with the nearest bus stop located at the Stype turn some 600 metres away. Whilst there are a number of buses passing on this route (X20/22 service), the number provided during peak hours is limited to one in each direction before 9am and none after 4:30pm. As stated above, travelling from the Great Bedwyn direction also requires the crossing of the A338. Therefore given the limited service during working hours, distance to the bus stop, the proximity to fast moving traffic at up to 60mph (including potentially having to cross the road), and lack of street lighting, this is considered to prohibit many journeys by this mode. In this same respect, it is not considered that the route is conducive to cycling.
- 6.8.9 Whilst some highways matters can be mitigated by conditions, it is considered that the location is unsustainable and inappropriate for this level of residential development and contrary to policy.

6.9 The impact on Neighbouring Amenity

- 6.9.1 The proposal has been laid out to ensure that the relationship between existing and proposed dwellings would not harm residential amenity. The existing farmhouse on site is to be altered and renovated as part of the proposal and there are no other existing dwellings within close proximity which would be adversely affected.
- 6.9.2 The Environmental Health Officer has been consulted and as the site forms part of a farm, potential for contamination may exist. Any development would need to include a full contamination report and proposed measures to mitigate the impact. A number of conditions have been recommended in this regard.
- 6.9.3 Therefore subject to conditions, the proposal is acceptable and in accordance with policies CS14 and saved policies OVS5 and OVS6.

6.10 Impact on Trees

- 6.10.1 Policy CS 18 of the Core Strategy requires green infrastructure such as tree protection orders and public rights of way to be conserved by development.
- 6.10.2 The application has not been accompanied by any detailed tree information. The Council's Tree Officer has visited the site and identified a number of trees which will be affected by the proposals. It is considered however that this information, can in this instance be dealt with adequately by condition.
- 6.10.3 With regard to landscaping within the site and treatment of new curtilage boundaries, this is of particular importance within this countryside and AONB location. Officers consider that appropriate conditions can be applied to secure appropriate implementation and management.
- 6.10.4 Therefore subject to conditions relating to trees, landscaping and boundary treatments, the proposal is considered to be acceptable and in accordance with policy.

6.11 Impact on Biodiversity and Geodiversity:

- 6.11.1 Core Strategy Policy CS17 states that biodiversity and geodiversity assets across West Berkshire will be conserved and enhanced. In order to conserve and enhance the environmental capacity of the District, all new development should maximise opportunities to achieve net gains in biodiversity and geodiversity in accordance with the Berkshire Biodiversity Action Plan and the Berkshire Local Geodiversity Action Plan.
- 6.11.2 An ecology survey has been submitted with the application A number of legally protected species and their supporting habitats have been identified as present within or adjacent to the development site.
- 6.11.3 Mitigation measures and biodiversity improvements have been proposed, such as Provision of bat boxes and nest boxes on the walls of buildings, and trees, a new pasture meadow, hedgerow planting in addition to improvements to the large farmyard pond. There will also be a significant reduction in concrete hardstanding amounting to over 4,200 sq m, in addition to the removal of 4 no. large asbestos clad agricultural buildings, with an overall footprint of 2,600sq m.
- 6.11.4 In order to mitigate the impact of the development on protected species and to secure the proposed improvements conditions are required in this regard.

6.11.5 The application is therefore considered to comply with European and national protected species legislation. The proposal is in accordance with Policy CS17 of the Core Strategy and advice set out in the NPPF.

6.12 Affordable Housing Provision

6.12.1 The Council's policy for affordable housing provision is set out in CS6 of the West Berkshire Local Plan 2006-2026. It enables the authority to seek affordable housing either on site or as a financial contribution in lieu of on site provision on sites of 5 units or more. The contribution levels for affordable housing for developments of 5 to 9 dwellings are 20% affordable housing, rounded up or down to the nearest whole unit. The Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document states that affordable housing should be provided on site unless there are exceptional circumstances.

6.12.2 There are 7 dwellings proposed on site and 20% of all dwellings on site are required for affordable housing provision, which equates to 2 units (rounded up). The SPD states the affordable housing should consist of 70% social rent and 30% intermediate housing options such as shared ownership. 2 units are proposed as affordable housing units on site; 2 x 2 bedroom houses.

6.12.3 To ensure satisfactory integration, affordable housing on new developments should be fully integrated within the general market housing. As this is a fairly small development the proposal to site the units in the centre of site integrated with the remaining units is considered acceptable.

6.12.4 The Council accept the level of affordable housing provision is acceptable and would usually be secured through a Section 106 legal agreement. In this instance as the application is recommended for refusal, the Council's legal services have not been instructed to progress a Section 106 agreement..

6.13 Flood Risk and Drainage

6.13.1 The Framework states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk. Core Strategy Policy CS16 strictly applies a sequential approach across the district. The application site is located in the Environment Agency's Flood Zone 1, which has the lowest probability of fluvial flood risk. Residential development is therefore generally considered appropriate in flood risk terms.

6.13.2 Core Strategy Policy CS16 states that on all development sites, surface water will be managed in a sustainable manner through the implementation of Sustainable Drainage Methods (SuDS) unless demonstrated to be inappropriate. An appropriately worded condition is recommended to secure such provision.

6.13.3 Thames Water has confirmed that they have no objection to the proposal in respect of water and sewerage infrastructure capacity subject to informatives.

6.14 CIL

6.14.1 Under the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule adopted by West Berkshire Council and the government Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations new dwellings are liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy. In this instance the site is within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty charging area under which the chargeable rate is £125 per m2 of gross internal area. A separate Community Infrastructure Levy liability notice detailing the chargeable amount is to be sent with planning decision notices.

6.15 Sustainable Development

6.15.1 The National Planning Policy Framework places a strong emphasis on sustainable development. All planning applications must result in sustainable development with consideration being given to economic, social and environmental sustainability aspects of the proposal.

6.15.2 New housing development would have economic benefit. The environmental considerations have been assessed in terms of design, amenity, biodiversity, highways, flooding and impact on the area and found to have a detrimental impact on the AONB. It is considered that proposal would result an isolated unsustainable development in the countryside distant from any settlement with limited sustainable transport options available. The principle of development is not considered acceptable with insufficient evidence to justify the proposal as a suitable rural exception site. Social considerations overlap those of environmental in terms of amenity and found to no adverse impact on the existing public right of way and residential amenity. The site would present environmental benefits and provide much needed affordable housing. It is considered however that these benefits are outweighed by the harm caused. Having assessed the application in these terms the development is not considered to constitute sustainable development.

7. Conclusion

7.1.1 The proposed level of alteration and enlargement of the farm buildings is considered unacceptably extensive. There is no exceptional need for a new dwelling in the countryside and whilst there is a need for affordable housing, it has not been justified that this location is required over other potentially more sustainable sites. It is therefore considered that the proposal will result in an isolated residential development which is out of keeping with the rural character of this AONB landscape. Having taken account of all the relevant policy considerations and other material considerations referred to above, it is considered that the application fails to comply with the development plan and is contrary to the NPPF and is therefore recommended for refusal.

8. Full Recommendation

The Head of Planning and Countryside be authorised to REFUSE planning permission.

Reasons:

1. The West Berkshire Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2015 (Housing - January 2016) shows that the Council can demonstrate a five year housing land supply. The Core Strategy, in accordance with the advice within paragraph 49 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012, provides an up to date framework for development planning in West Berkshire.

The application site is situated in an unsustainable location outside of a defined settlement boundary. It comprises greenfield land within the countryside, and a protected nationally designated landscape of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty where new development is strictly controlled. The site is not included in the Core Strategy district settlement hierarchy which identifies the most sustainable settlements for development. The proposed development is not considered to be a Rural Exception site under the criteria set out in Policy HSG.11 of the Local Plan or Policy C2 of the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document. Nor does it represent any other exceptional circumstance for housing development in the countryside assessed against Policy HSG.1 of the Local Plan and Policy C1 of the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document. The proposed development therefore fails to comply with Policies ADPP1, ADPP5, CS1 and CS13, of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026, Policy HSG.1 and HSG.11 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan Saved Policies 2007, and Policy C1 and C2 of the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document, and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

Character of the Countryside

2. The proposed development would by virtue of the extent of the alterations and extensions to the existing agricultural buildings in conjunction with the proposed new dwellings would result in a substantial isolated form and scale of domestic development which would be inappropriate to this agricultural site. Furthermore, the site is located within the North Wessex Downs AONB and is clearly visible. The development would adversely affect the natural beauty of the landscape and special visual qualities of the countryside and AONB.

This form of development is to the detriment of the visual, spatial and environmental character of the area within the countryside. The proposal conflicts with Development Plan Policies ADPP1, ADPP5, CS14 and CS19 (West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2016), HSG1 and ENV20 (West Berkshire Local Plan Saved policies 2007), Policies C1, C4 of the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document, Supplemental Planning Document Quality Design and advice contained within the NPPF.

Lack of S106 Housing

3. The proposed development fails to provide a planning obligation to secure the appropriate provision of affordable housing. As such, the development fails to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework 2012, the Planning Practice Guidance, Policies CS5 and CS6 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026, and the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document.

Lack of S278 Agreement

4. The application fails to provide a Section 278 agreement for an appropriate scheme of works to accommodate the impact of the development on local infrastructure, or provide an appropriate mitigation measure such as a planning obligation. The proposal is therefore contrary to Government advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework 2012, Policies CS5 and CS13 of the West Berkshire District Core Strategy 2006-2026, and Policy TRANS.1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan Saved Policies 2007.

DC