

LAND REAR OF THE OLD RAILWAY HOTEL, PORTON



Proposed development of three detached houses with associated parking, access and landscaping

PLANNING STATEMENT

November 2025

Statement checked by Matthew Holmes, BA (Hons), MA MRTPI

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- i. This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a planning application for the development of land to the rear of The Old Railway Hotel (formerly the Porton Hotel), Porton, to construct three detached houses.
- ii. Planning permission has previously been sought for the construction of three houses on the site and was later dismissed at appeal. The matters raised within the dismissed appeal are addressed by this amended application such that the development can now be permitted.
- iii. The proposals have been developed having regard to the relevant national and local planning policies, specifically;
 - The proposed site is located within the defined settlement boundary of a large village where new residential development is supported,
 - The proposed development is of a high quality design appropriate to the character of the area,
 - The proposals will preserve the amenities of existing homes nearby the site, and provide a high standard of amenity for its future residents,
 - Important existing trees and hedges on the site are preserved,
 - The proposals take account of, and include measures to enhance the biodiversity on the site,
 - Car parking is provided in accordance with the Council's adopted parking standards and the site is accessible to public transport.
- iv. The application is accompanied by a full set of technical reports undertaken by suitably qualified consultants and the plans have been developed with due regard to their findings. The application proposals are therefore appropriately considered and informed.
- v. Having regard to the contents of this Planning Statement, and the other reports that accompany the application, we conclude that the planning permission can reasonably and justifiably be granted for the development.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of TORH Pension Scheme in support of a planning application in relation to the proposed development of three dwellings together with associated parking, access and landscaping on land rear of The Old Railway Hotel (formerly the Porton Hotel), Winterslow Road, Porton.
- 1.2 This Statement aims to explain the design principles that have been applied to the development. The Statement demonstrates how the proposals will comply with the relevant national and local planning policies and will reflect the local patterns of development and neighbouring buildings in terms of layout and siting, height, scale, materials and landscaping. The proposed dwellings will contribute to delivering new market homes within the Amesbury Community Area and make a valuable contribution towards housing supply within Wiltshire.
- 1.3 The application comprises:
- Completed application form
 - Plans and drawings
 - This Planning Statement
 - Arboricultural Impact Assessment
 - Ecology Appraisal
 - Noise Assessment
 - Completed Community Infrastructure Levy Form 0

2. Site Context

- 2.1 The site is located towards the southern end of the village of Porton, within the parish of Idmiston. The land previously formed a part of the curtilage of the Old Railway Hotel and is mostly undeveloped lying between the hotel building and Winterslow Road. It slopes upwards from front to back.
- 2.2 The land falls within the settlement boundary of Porton but outside of the Porton Conservation Area. The site contains limited landscaping in being primarily lawn, other than for hedging and trees on the southeast site boundary.



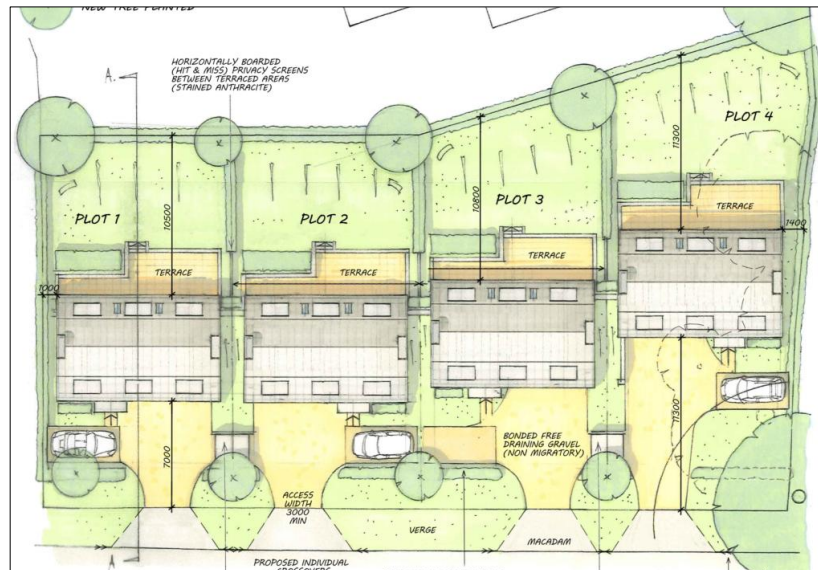
Aerial view of the site (www.google.co.uk)

- 2.3 This section of Winterslow Road is characterised by residential dwellings of various styles, predominately detached houses and bungalows, that front the highway with driveways and front gardens. To the northwest of the application site is a Telephone Exchange building, which is sited away from the boundary with the application site, and to the southeast are two detached houses set back from the road, nos.73 and 75 Winsterslow Road.

3. Planning History

- 3.1 In February 2023 a pre-application enquiry was submitted proposing the construction of four detached homes on the site (LPA pre-application enquiry ref. ENQ/2023/00257). Extracts of the submitted plans are shown below.



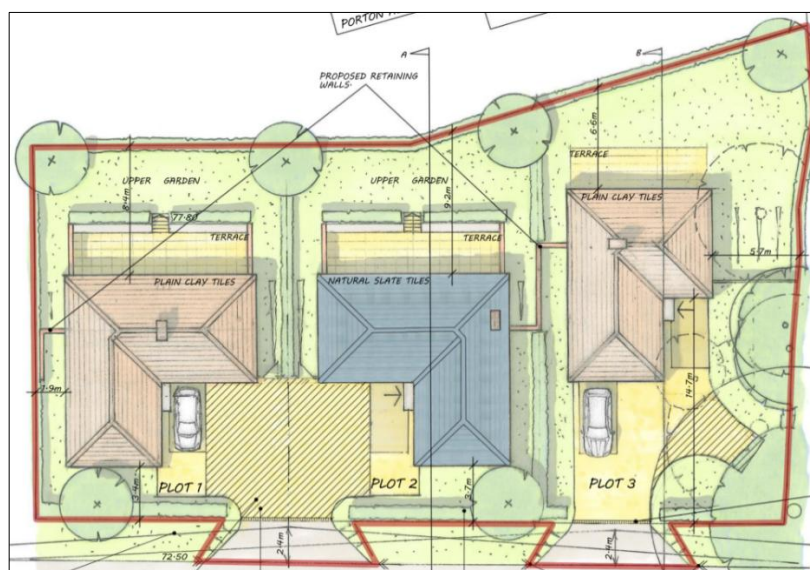


In their response to the enquiry the Planning Officer commented that;

- Idmiston is defined as a Large Village and the site is within the settlement boundary.
- Core Policy 2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy confirms that within Large Villages, development will predominantly take the form of small housing and employment sites. Small housing developments are further defined as less than 10 units.
- Whilst there is also a variety of house designs/materials in the area, they all have traditional/conventional pitched roof designs (hipped or gabled). It is considered that the proposed mansard roof design, is an inappropriate design feature within the site context and exacerbates the prominence/dominance of the dwellings within the street scene.
- A reduction in the height/scale of the development, along with the numbers of units proposed, (in order to address/accommodate the development better within the existing sloping site/landform) along with a design that is more in keeping with the context of more conventional designed dwellings may achieve a development that will satisfactorily assimilate into the street scene to address NP and development plan policies.
- In line with the Wiltshire Parking Strategy three parking spaces are required to serve proposed 4x bedroom dwellings.

3.2 Following receipt of the pre-application enquiry response and taking account of the advice received the applicants revised the scheme to three homes. As well as reducing the number of units the application also redesigned the houses themselves to show hipped roofs. The

application was submitted in June 2023 (LPA ref. PL/2023/06362) and extracts of the plans are show below.



Proposed site plan and context elevation extracts (Relpross Partnership Architects)

During the course of the assessment of application ref. PL/2023/06362 there were a number of comments submitted on the proposals by the LPA's consultees. Of note is that the environmental health officer made some comments and requested some more information in terms of noise, and that a surface water drainage strategy for the site was requested. Additionally the tree officer, whilst not raising any concerns in principle with the proposals requested a landscaping scheme for the development. Finally, the highways officer made requests for minor changes to the site plan in order to improve the manouvring for cars accessing plots 1 and 2. The applicants later withdrew the application in order to give them sufficient time to address these issues.

3.3 In March 2024 the applicants submitted an amended planning application for the construction of three houses on the site (LPA ref. PL/2024/03203). That application was later recommended for approval by the LPA's planning officer but the recommendation was overruled by the LPA's planning committee and the application refused for two reasons;

1. That the proposal would not meet an identified need and that housing targets within the Idmiston Neighbourhood Plan had already been exceeded, and
2. That the proposal would result in an overdevelopment of the site and would be detrimental to highway safety.

The applicants submitted an appeal against the refusal of the planning application (Planning Inspectorate ref. APP/Y3940/W/25/3362792). The appeal was later dismissed. In respect of the main issues the Inspector made the following comments;

- *'I find that the proposed development would provide an appropriate mix of dwellings having regard to their size. The proposal would therefore accord with the aims of Core Policy 45 of the WCS'. (paragraph 8)*
- *'Despite the modest size of the rear garden areas, and unconventional arrangement, the development would nonetheless provide space for future occupiers to carry out the usual outdoor activities associated with a dwelling, such as the drying of clothes or the siting of a table and chairs. The space would also allow for some forms of outdoor play, commensurate with the size of the dwelling. Furthermore, while the depth of the gardens would not strictly accord with the advice in the Wiltshire Design Guide 2024 (WDG), the overall garden areas would not be dissimilar to the footprint of the dwellings. Having regard to these factors, the private amenity space would be likely to comfortably serve the typical needs of those who will use them, in accordance with expectations set out in the WDG' (paragraph 10)*
- *'the proposed development would not appear unduly cramped or at odds with the prevailing character of the surrounding development.'* (paragraph 11)
- *'I am satisfied that the proposed development would not be harmful to highway safety. It would therefore not conflict with the aims of Policy 9 of the NP which require new development proposals to demonstrate how any additional traffic generated by the proposal will be managed in terms of parking and highway safety.'* (paragraph 15)
- *'The proposal would offer benefits in terms of housing supply, which is a key objective of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), in a location where future occupiers of the dwellings would have access to local amenities and facilities by means*

other than the private car. It would also accord with policies in the Framework which seek to support development that makes efficient use of land and recognise the important contribution that small sites, which are often built-out relatively quickly, can make to meeting the housing requirement of an area. Notwithstanding the modest scale of the development, for 3 dwellings, given the current circumstances in the district, the provision of additional housing would nonetheless be valuable. (paragraph 23)

- *'For the reasons set out above, the proposed development would not give rise to harm by virtue of the size of the dwellings, amount and quality of outdoor amenity space or highway safety. The proposal would also contribute to the supply of housing; in a location where future occupiers of the dwellings would not be wholly reliant on the private motor car (paragraph 28)*

Therefore, the Inspector did not uphold any of the reasons that the Planning Committee gave for the refusal of the planning application. However, the Inspector did raise concern with the LPA's approach or addressing nutrient neutrality matters by condition and instead contended that without those matters being dealt with at the planing application stage adverse impacts on the River Avon SAC could not be ruled out.

4. The proposed development

- 4.1 This planning application is a resubmission of application ref. PL/2024/03203. As the development was found by the Appeal Inspector to be acceptable in design and highway safety terms the plans are unchanged.
- 4.2 In order to address the sole reason why the last appeal was dismissed the Applicants will agree the approach to achieving nutrient neutrality with the Local Planning Authority during the course of the application. The LPA will therefore be able to conclude that the proposals will not result in adverse impacts on the River Avon SAC. Once that has been achieved, and in view of the outcome of the previous appeal the planning application must be considered acceptable.

5. Relevant Planning Policies

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance

- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) confirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Sustainable development is defined as encompassing economic, social and environmental factors. The

social role includes supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations and by creating a high-quality built environment.

- 5.2 The NPPF confirms that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is “at the heart of the Framework” to ensure sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, and which applies to both plan-making and decision-taking. For decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance (see footnote 7) provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination
- 5.3 Paragraph 14 of the NPPF confirms that in situation where the presumption applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with a neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits where the neighbourhood plan is less than five years old and that the plan contains allocations to meet its identified housing requirement.
- 5.4 Paragraph 61 of the NPPF confirms the Government’s objective of ‘*significantly boosting the supply of housing*’. That is to be achieved by ensuring that a sufficient amount and variety of land comes forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed, and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.
- 5.5 Paragraph 73 promotes the development of small and medium-sized sites, which ‘can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area,... and are often built out relatively quickly’.

- 5.6 Section 11 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Substantial weight should be given to the value of using suitable brown field land within settlements for homes and other identified needs. The development of under-utilised land and buildings should be supported.
- 5.7 Paragraph 125 states that planning policies and decisions should *‘promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively’*.
- 5.8 Paragraph 129 of the NPPF confirms that planning decisions should support development that makes an efficient use of land, taking into account identified housing needs, availability of land, local market conditions and the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting. Development should take place at appropriate densities, making ‘optimal use of the potential of each site’ (paragraph 130).
- 5.9 Paragraph 131 of the NPPF confirms that the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Local Planning Policy

- 5.10 The Development Plan for this part of Wiltshire comprises the Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted 2015), Salisbury District Local Plan (2011) saved policies and the Idmiston Neighbourhood Plan (2017). Each relevant policy is considered in turn below:

Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015)

- 5.11 Core Policy 1: ‘Settlement Strategy’ identifies the settlements where development will take place, Allington is identified as a small village. *“Development at large and small villages will be limited to that needed to help meet the housing needs of settlements and to improve employment opportunities, services and facilities”*.
- 5.12 Core Policy 2: ‘Delivery Strategy’ seeks to deliver 42,000 homes in Wiltshire during the plan

period 2006-2026. There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development at the Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Large Villages (Porton is defined as large village).

- 5.13 Core Policy 3: 'Infrastructure Requirements' requires all new development to provide on-site and, where appropriate, off-site infrastructure requirements arising from the proposal. The requirements are to be delivered directly by the developer or through financial contributions.
- 5.14 Core Policy 4: 'Spatial Strategy: Amesbury Community Area' Over the plan period approximately 2,785 homes will be provided in the area, of which about 345 should occur outside of Amesbury, Bulford and Durrington. Specific issues and considerations include; The delivery of balanced growth in the area, a transport assessment is required for any major development proportionate to the scale of the proposal, a shortage of amenity space in the area, development with the potential to increase recreational pressure upon the Salisbury Plain SPA will be required to provide proportionate contributions towards the Stone Curlew Management Strategy, ongoing protection and enhancement of the stone curlew and calcareous grassland habitat at Porton Down, development needs to conserve the designated landscape of Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB and its setting.
- 5.15 Core Policy 45: 'Meeting Wiltshire's Housing Need' states that new housing must be well designed to address local need, incorporating a range of different types, tenures and sizes of homes.
- 5.16 Core Policy 50: 'Biodiversity and geodiversity' states that all development proposals should seek to enhance biodiversity.
- 5.17 Core Policy 57: 'Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping' A high standard of design is required in all new developments. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality. Development should make an efficient use of land whilst taking account of the characteristics of the site and local context.
- 5.18 Core Policy 64: 'Demand Management' residential parking will be based on minimum parking standards as set out in the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 Car Parking Strategy. Minimum parking standards per property are: 1 bedroom = 1 space, 2 to 3 bedrooms = 2 spaces and 4+ bedrooms = 3 spaces, with 0.2 visitor spaces per dwelling.

- 5.19 Salisbury District Local Plan (2011) Saved Policy C6 refers to development within the Special Landscape Area. Development must have regard to the high quality of the landscape and the siting and the scale of development must be sympathetic with the landscape, and must use high standards of landscaping and design, using materials which are appropriate to the locality and reflect the character of the area.

Idmiston Neighbourhood Plan (2017)

- 5.20 The Idmiston Neighbourhood Plan covers the three neighbouring villages of Idmiston, Porton and Gomeldon. The Plan aims to ensure that future development within the Parish reflects the community's needs and aspirations. Policy 7 states that all new housing developments and extensions to existing houses should be designed to be locally distinctive so that they reflect and enhance the character of the village as identified in the Idmiston, Porton and Gomeldon Village Design Statement.
- 5.21 Policy 16 of the Neighbourhood Plan refers to infill development within the villages. The policy states that any development using the gardens and grounds of older properties in the villages will need to:
- Avoid compromising the setting of the existing dwelling-house and the contribution of both house and garden to the character and appearance of the villages.
 - Conserve the green aspect of the area by the retention of as many viable trees and hedgerows as is practicable, including any original cob and brick and/or flint boundary walls.
 - Demonstrate how the proposed scheme will positively enhance the appearance and character of the villages and their Conservation Areas, where these exist.
- 5.22 Policy 17 sets out the development criteria for new proposals. Any developments in villages will need to meet all of the following criteria:
- Be well related to the existing village envelope.
 - Be of modest scale and not generally exceed ten dwellings, in order to protect the rural nature of the village.
 - Reflect the character and variety of the existing pattern of development in the village.
 - Follow the lines of the contours on sloping sites to ensure a better fit with the existing land form.

6. Design and Policy Analysis

Use

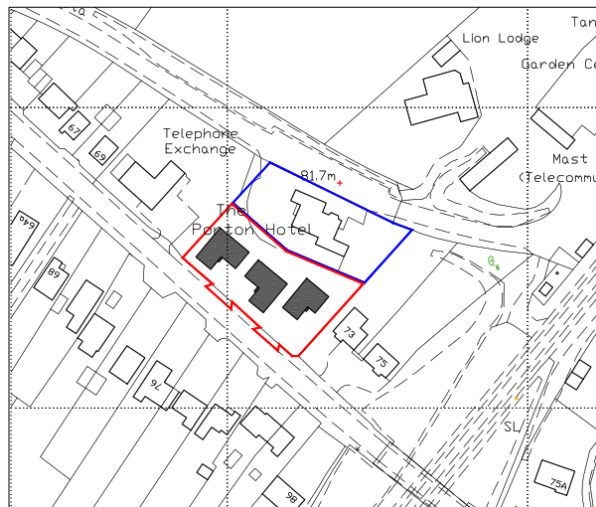
- 6.1 Core Strategy Core Policies 1 and 2 support new residential development within large villages such as Porton. The 2017 Strategic Housing Market Assessment also confirms a general need for more 2, 3 & 4 bed housing in the Amesbury area. The proposed development would deliver a net gain of three homes and therefore the proposal will make a meaningful contribution towards meeting local needs in accordance with Core Policies 1, 4 and 45.
- 6.2 The application site sits within the established settlement boundary of Porton and new housing development is therefore acceptable in principle in accordance with policy 17 of the Neighbourhood Plan. Residential development is also appropriate in the context of the Winterslow Road street scene, which is characterised by detached two storey homes.
- 6.3 The NPPF states that *'Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby'*. The proposed development is considered an appropriate and proportionate addition to the village in that context.
- 6.4 The proposals utilise unused land currently falling within the curtilage of the Old Railway Hotel. As a result of the fall in land levels between the hotel itself and Winterslow Road the land does not fulfil any positive function for the hotel itself. Development of the land as proposed will therefore not impact upon the ongoing operation or future retention of the hotel which will retain its existing access and parking arrangements.

Amount

- 6.5 The proposal will result in a net gain of 3 dwellings and will contribute towards the delivery of new homes as per Core Policies 2 and 4. The density of development is low for the site, respecting the character of adjacent residential development and its village location. The proposed development will ensure an efficient use of the land in a sustainable location.
- 6.6 The development is for 2x 4-bedroom and 1x 3-bedroom houses with private gardens and onsite parking. Each house exceeds the nationally described space standards. This confirms that the development will provide a high standard of residential amenity for its residents and helps confirm that the quantum of development is appropriate for the site.

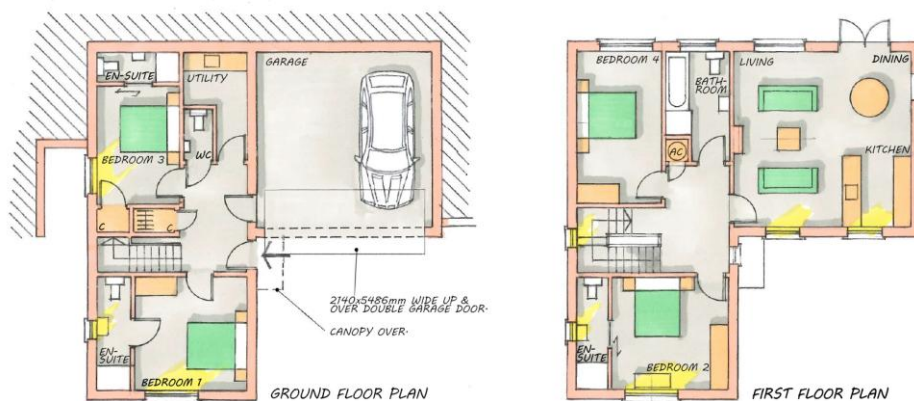
Layout

- 6.7 The proposed layout of development on the site has been informed by the site land levels and the need to preserve neighbour amenity and the character of the area. To that end the houses are sited centrally within their respective plots, set back from the highway, with terraces and gardens to the rear. The proposed separation distances will also ensure neighbour amenity is preserved and the new buildings will respect the building line and pattern of development on the northeast side of Winterslow Road, as demonstrated by the location extract below.



Location plan extract (Relphross Partnership Architects)

- 6.8 The internal layout of each house takes into consideration the change in land levels, with the main living areas to the first floor and bedrooms across both ground and first floors. The proposed layout provides direct access to the rear gardens from the living areas.



Proposed floor plan extract for plot 1 (Relphross Partnership Architects)

Scale and Appearance

- 6.9 The new buildings will appear as two-storey in height from the highway, reflecting the scale of development in the village as per the Parish Plan. Due to the land levels the houses will appear as one-storey from the rear. This is considered an appropriate design response for the topography of the site. The Old Railway Hotel, to the rear of the site, occupies a higher position, and as such the new houses will appear subordinate in scale.
- 6.10 New tree planting and sensitive landscaping within the site and along the boundaries will enhance the setting of the site and ensure a positive impact on the surrounding area. The new houses are designed to sit comfortably within the landscape and the scale of neighbouring residential development. Porton lies within the chalk river valley landscape, lying low compared to the high chalk plains to the east and west, and the proposed development will be sympathetic to this character in accordance with Saved Policy C6.
- 6.11 The proposed buildings have been carefully designed to respond positively to the key characteristics of other dwellings found within Winterslow Road and the context of the Special Landscape Area in accordance with Core Policy 57, Saved Policy C6 and the Parish Plan. The houses will have hipped roofs and a tradition appearance. The proposed high quality materials include red brick, yellow brick, timber cladding, clay tiles and natural slate.
- 6.12 The proximity to the built form of dwellings to the southeast and directly opposite the site will ensure the new development reads as continuing the pattern of development in the village. In views along Winterslow Road the development will be partially obscured by the existing mature trees and the proposed new boundary treatments and planting, and will be seen within the context of the adjacent residential dwellings.



Proposed context elevation plan extract (Relphross Partnership Architects)

Landscaping

- 6.13 The site is currently undeveloped, and the intention is to retain the southeast boundary of the site to conserve existing habitats. Proposed landscaping includes hedgerows and new trees and other ecological features to ensure a net gain in biodiversity.
- 6.14 The proposed new boundary between the existing hotel and the new houses will include trees and hedges to minimise any intervisibility between the two sites and preserve the privacy of future occupants. In addition the rear terraces to plots 1 and 2 will sit lower within the surrounding garden to ensure level access to the living areas and added privacy.

7. Access

- 7.1 New vehicle and pedestrian access will be created off Winterslow Road for each dwelling. The proposed site plan demonstrates a shared access and turning area for plots 1 and 2, and a separate access for plot 3. Each house will benefit from integral garages and onsite parking that meets the current parking standards. The parking arrangement for plots 1 and 2 have been revised in response to the comments of the highways officer on the first application.
- 7.2 The application site is in a sustainable location, being within walking distance of local services within Porton and easy access to other local services within the wider Idmiston Parish. The site is within 10 minutes (5.3miles) drive of Amesbury town centre which provides numerous local services and employment opportunities, and 15 minutes (5.9miles) drive to Salisbury. The A338 is a main distributor road and there are bus services that pass through Porton. The site's location is therefore ideally suited for residential development.
- 7.3 It is not anticipated that there will be significant additional traffic generated by the proposed development that will adversely affect road safety or the ability of the transport infrastructure to accommodate the traffic.

8. Planning Obligations

- 8.1 The proposal to construct new dwellings creates a need for the development to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy upon the commencement of works. The Applicant is aware of that requirement and an assumption of liability form will accompany the planning application.
- 8.2 The Applicant is aware that the site falls within the River Avon catchment, therefore nutrient mitigation will be required. Also development with the potential to increase recreational

pressure upon the Salisbury Plain SPA will be required to provide proportionate contributions towards the Stone Curlew Management Strategy.

9. Conclusion

9.1 In accordance with the NPPF consideration needs to be given as to whether the proposal constitutes sustainable development. In this case the development is sustainable for the following reasons:

- From an economic perspective, the proposal will provide 3 new homes on the site that comply with the aims of the Local Plan and the NPPF to boost the supply of housing and make a contribution towards Wiltshire's housing needs;
- From a social perspective, the proposal will provide new homes of an appropriate design, that will make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of Porton, and shall be highly accessible to local services; and
- From an environment perspective, the proposal will preserve the character and appearance of the area, using natural resources, in this case land, efficiently to create 3 new homes whilst preserving the onsite trees and biodiversity.

9.2 It is therefore considered that the design rationale set out in this Planning Statement demonstrate that the proposed development is acceptable.