



WHALEBACK

PLANNING STATEMENT

Conholt Park, Chute

ADDRESS

Conholt Park
Conholt Lane
Wiltshire, SP11 9HA

APPLICANT

Conholt Nominees Ltd

OUR REFERENCE

W2762

DATE

January 2026

WHALEBACK

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This S73A application for planning permission is submitted on behalf of the applicant, Conholt Nominees Limited, for the retention of a staff car park within the estate, on the area of land identified as 'Upper Parkland'. This Planning Statement identifies the context and need for the proposed development and includes an assessment of how it accords with relevant national and local planning policies.
- 1.2 This Planning Statement describes the application site and its surroundings, the development proposal, the planning history of the site, and relevant planning policy framework. A planning appraisal is provided, to consider the merits of the application followed by a conclusion.

2. Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site is located within Chute Civil Parish, on the eastern border of Wiltshire and within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. There is no Neighbourhood Plan for the area although there is a Parish Design Guide, and the primary Development Plan Document is Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy (2015). It is outside any Settlement Boundary and within the countryside for planning policy purposes.
- 2.2 The application site falls within Conholt Park, located off Hungerford Lane, which is an estate of approximately 2,500 acres. The main house of Conholt Park is 6 miles north northwest of Andover, 6.5 miles northeast of Tidworth, 12 miles southwest of Newbury and 12 miles southeast of Marlborough. An intricate network of rural lanes wind across the area and there are few main roads; Chute Forest retains a tranquil rural character despite its proximity to Andover and Tidworth.
- 2.3 The application site comprises a parcel of land located within the 'Upper Parkland' at Conholt Park. The application site is edged with a red line as shown in figure 1 below and is located to the north of the existing staff car park and Main Working Access (at the junction with Chute Causeway) which can be found on the proposed Block Plans approved as part of extant permissions PL/2023/04076 and PL/2024/02281 and in figure 2 below.



Figure 1: Proposed Car Park Retention - Red Line Boundary

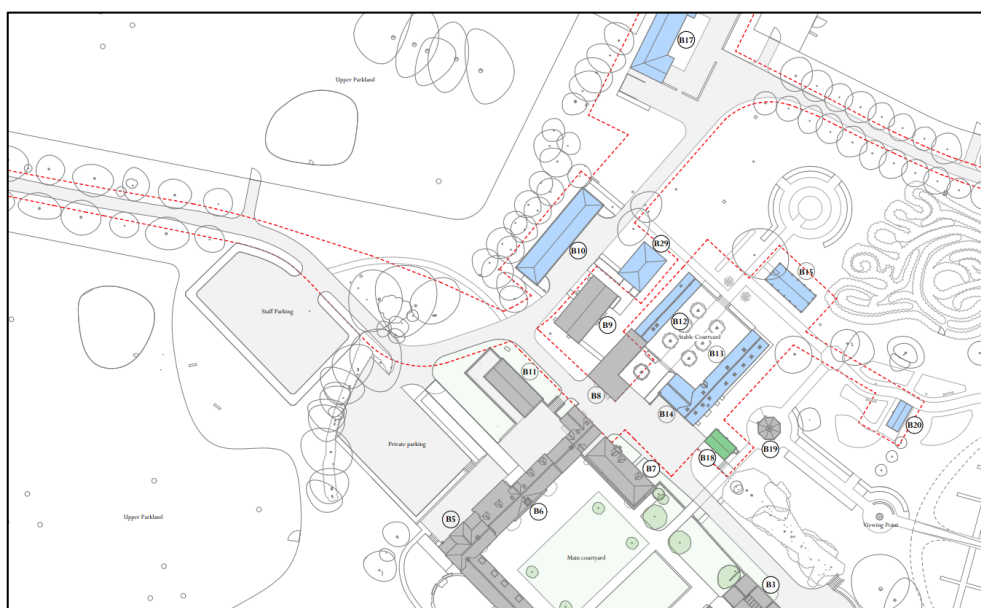


Figure 2: Proposed Block Plan of approved extant permissions PL/2023/04076 and PL/2024/02281

- 2.4 The Main Working Access entry point sits directly the opposite the eastern end of Chute Causeway and the site is approximately 150m along the Main Working Access from its entry point. A secondary access, known as the Middle Access, is provided via Hungerford Lane to the south-west and historically served as the primary driveway to the main house. The main house is now served by a separate, dedicated access via Front Park.
- 2.5 The staff car park to be retained under this application formed part of the temporary site works for the delivery of the wider estate regeneration, incorporating a roadway and parking spaces. It comprises a sub base and tarmac capping as shown on drawing 001/L of extant permission

PL/2024/08005 and in figure 3 below. This application was approved subject to the removal of the temporary works at the end of project and the ground reinstated. Prior to the temporary works the ground was laid to grass.

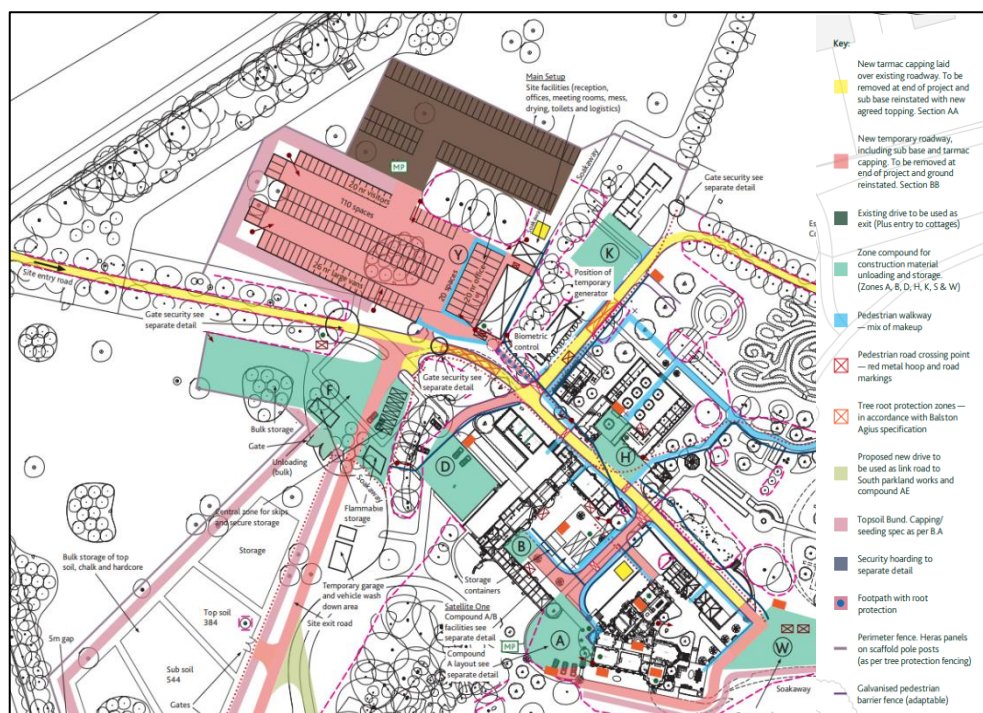


Figure 3: Temporary Site Works masterplan

3. Proposed Development

- 3.1 This application seeks planning permission for the retention of an additional dedicated staff parking area at Conholt Park within the area of the estate identified as 'Upper Parkland'. The provision of this facility is necessary to support the day to day running of the estate and to ensure efficient operations across the wider site.
- 3.2 It has become apparent that the previously approved parking arrangements are insufficient to accommodate the number of staff required on site each day. As a result, additional formal parking provision is now required.
- 3.3 The proposed Block Plan approved under extant permissions PL/2023/04076 and PL/2024/02281 (Figure 1) identifies a staff parking area accommodating 17 spaces. This provision was intended to accommodate full-time staff who are required on site daily, as well as visitors who are not directly employed by the estate but may need to attend for operational purposes, including consultants and contractors.
- 3.4 It has become clear that the number of full-time staff required on site exceeds the capacity of this car park, creating a need for additional parking provision. Staff requiring parking include those based in the estate office, the garden team, the security team, and the house team, amounting to approximately 40 members of staff in total.

4. Relevant Planning History

- 4.1 There is an extensive planning history associated with the site. Those applications of most relevance include:
- **PL/2021/08163 (Phase 0)** - Creation of a new access to cottages at Conholt Middle Farm, in order to improve safety for cottage residents and farm staff – **Approved – 20.10.2021**
 - **PL/2023/01783 and associated LBC PL/2023/02290 (Phase 1)** - Construction of an Energy Centre to serve the main house and wider estate; Demolition of the existing modern swimming pool and enclosure and the creation of a new, three-storey extension on the site of the lost north-western wing; Proposed alterations to, and refurbishment of, the existing main house including the creation of a new external Kitchen Link to provide direct access from the main house to the new kitchen in the proposed extension; Removal of the brick WC tower on the north-western elevation – **Approved – 15.09.2023**
 - **PL/2023/03301 and associated LBC PL/2023/03656 (Phase 2)** - Alterations and refurbishment of the Courtyard comprising external works (buildings 2, 3 and 4 withdrawn from this application) – **Approved – 05.12.2023**
 - **PL/2023/04076 and associated LBC PL/2023/04587 (Phase 3)** - Estate regeneration including demolition, refurbishment and conversion of Stable Courtyard buildings to provide ancillary staff accommodation, construction of detached Garage and Storage Building, construction of Laundry Building, repair and refurbishment of The Old Granary, construction of detached Stables, refurbishment of Garden Room, construction of Loggia within the Walled Garden, Construction of Staff Mess Room, Workshop and Tool Store and Machine Store within new Service Yard, and associated scheme of hard and soft landscaping – **Approved – 12.01.2024**
 - **PL/2024/02281 (Phase 4)** - Fourth phase of proposals for the restoration of the designed landscape of Front Park including: the extension of the south lawn with the creation of new ha-ha; the creation of new lake for habitat creation and biodiversity enhancement, water capture and storage and fire protection; new parkland tree planting; the creation of new entrance and approach drive through Front Park; and construction of eye-catcher - **Approved – 10.07.2024**
 - **PL/2024/08005 (Temporary site works)** - (Retrospective) Temporary site works and buildings supporting approved development works around the Conholt Park Estate, encompassing tarmac car park, welfare/office facilities, construction access roads, pathways, and surfacing of existing tracks in tarmac, stockpiles of various materials, vehicle, and storage compounds. Implementation of landscape restoration measures following completion of works and the removal of all temporary site works – **Approved – 02.12.2024**

5. Planning Policy Framework

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The Wiltshire Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) was formally adopted on 20 January 2015. This plan is the Council's primary decision-making framework and the starting point for determining planning decisions.

Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015)

5.2 Key policies for this application include:

Core Policy 48: Supporting Rural Life

— This Policy seeks to sustain rural communities by:

- Allowing essential rural workers to live close to their jobs where this is genuinely necessary for agriculture, forestry, or other countryside based work.
- Improving access to rural services and infrastructure so that isolated communities remain connected and supported.
- Encouraging the reuse of rural buildings for employment, tourism, community uses, and, where appropriate, residential conversion.
- Supporting the retention of key community facilities, including through community ownership and small scale enabling development.
- Allowing small scale village and farm shops where they do not undermine nearby centres or harm rural character.

Core Policy 51: Landscape

— Development must protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance landscape character. Proposals should be informed by landscape assessments and must safeguard key features such as natural elements, settlement character, views, tranquillity, heritage assets and the special qualities of designated landscapes (especially National Landscapes and the New Forest National Park). Where development affects these areas or their setting, it must demonstrate that it will not harm their landscape qualities and that any unavoidable impacts are sensitively mitigated.

Core Policy 57: Ensuring high Quality Design and place Shaping

— Requires all development to achieve a high standard of design that responds positively to local character and creates a strong sense of place. Proposals must respect natural and historic features, integrate well with existing townscape and landscape, protect amenity, and use high-quality materials. Development should maximise sustainability, retain important landscaping, ensure safe and attractive public spaces, reduce opportunities for crime, and demonstrate how it fits within its context. Major schemes must be supported by a clear design statement or masterplan

Core Policy 58: Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment

— Requires development to protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance the historic environment. It places strong emphasis on safeguarding designated heritage assets and their settings - such as listed buildings, conservation areas, archaeological remains, historic parks and important landscapes - in a way that reflects their significance. Non-designated heritage assets that contribute to local character must also be respected and, where appropriate, enhanced. The policy encourages proposals that improve the condition of heritage assets at risk and expects development to be informed by relevant heritage advice and assessments.

- 5.3 Wiltshire Council submitted the Wiltshire Local Plan Pre-Submission Draft 2020 – 2038 (Regulation 19) to the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government for independent examination on 28th November 2024.
- 5.4 Following the first week of Stage 2 Hearings, (11th – 13th November 2025) the Inspector confirmed that the Wiltshire Local Plan Examination is now on hold, with all remaining Hearing Sessions postponed. The Inspector's letter highlights concerns requiring further work on several key areas which will need to be completed before hearings can continue. The Emerging Wiltshire Local Plan therefore carries minimal weight.
- 5.5 Other relevant documents include:
— The North Wessex Downs National Landscape Management Plan 2025 – 2030

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance

- 5.6 Although not part of the Development Plan, the NPPF and PPG are an important material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The Court of Appeal case *Mead Realisations Ltd v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government* EWCA Civ 32 confirmed that the PPG has the same legal status as the NPPF. The ruling establishes that the PPG can provide clarifying or modifying details to the NPPF, and both documents must be followed in planning decisions.
- 5.7 A presumption in favour of sustainable development is found at the heart of the NPPF, for both plan-making and decision-taking, defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 5.8 Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives): economic, social and environmental.
- 5.9 For decision-taking this means approving applications that accord with up-to-date policies without delay; or where policies are absent, silent or out-of-date, granting permission unless the Framework provides clear reasons for refusing a proposal in a particular location or any adverse impacts of permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

6. Planning Appraisal

Principle of development

- 6.1 The proposed staff car park accords with the overarching aims of Core Policy 48 (Supporting rural Life) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, which seeks to sustain rural communities by improving access to services and supporting essential rural infrastructure. The policy recognises that development which enhances connectivity between rural destinations, reduces isolation, and strengthens the functioning of rural enterprises can be supported where it does not harm the local environment or residential amenity.

- 6.2 In this context, the estate operates as a significant rural employer and service hub, with staff required to travel to areas not served by public transport. Providing a dedicated and appropriately sized and located staff car park is therefore an essential piece of infrastructure that enables employees to access their place of work safely and reliably.
- 6.3 Despite extensive efforts to rely on historic parking areas and to utilise parts of the estate that already accommodated development, it has become clear that the existing provision is no longer sufficient to meet operational needs. The recent programme of redevelopment and enhancement across the estate has resulted in a more intensive and diverse pattern of activity, alongside new landscaped areas and heritage improvements that must be protected and maintained.
- 6.4 The estate's growing staff team, combined with the need to safeguard restored parkland, ecological improvements and the setting of key buildings, means that a dedicated, purpose-designed staff car park is now essential. Without it, parking would be dispersed, ad hoc and operationally inefficient, with a heightened risk of conflict between vehicles, harm to sensitive areas, and pressure on spaces never intended for long-term staff use.
- 6.5 The proposal directly supports the policy's objective of improving accessibility within rural areas. By consolidating staff parking in a single, well planned location, the development enhances the efficiency of internal movement across the estate and reduces informal or ad hoc parking that could otherwise lead to landscape or amenity impacts. The car park underpins the day to day functioning of the estate, ensuring that its employment, land management, and community facing roles can continue to operate effectively. In doing so, it contributes to the wider rural economy and helps maintain the vitality of the surrounding area.
- 6.6 Importantly, the scheme has been designed to ensure that it will not be to the detriment of the local environment or nearby residents, in full accordance with the safeguards set out in Core Policy 48. The siting, scale, and landscape treatment of the car park have been carefully considered to minimise visual impact, utilise existing access routes, and integrate the development sensitively within the estate's established pattern of built form and land use. As a result, the proposal represents a proportionate and policy compliant infrastructure improvement that supports the long term sustainability of the estate and aligns clearly with the principles of Core Policy 48.

Landscape

- 6.7 The proposed staff car park has been designed to align with the principles and expectations set out in the North Wessex Downs National Landscape Management Plan (NWDNLMP) as required by Core Policy 51 (Landscape) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, ensuring that the development supports the overarching purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the protected landscape. As a modest piece of operational estate infrastructure, the car park has been landscape-led, with its siting, scale and design informed by the local landscape character, visual sensitivities and the functional requirements of the estate.
- 6.8 The development is small in scale and operational in nature. The location has been selected to minimise visual prominence, avoid intrusion into open views, and sit within an existing envelope of estate activity. The proposal contributes positively to biodiversity and nature recovery through the incorporation of native planting, habitat creation and opportunities for ecological enhancement.

- 6.9 Details of the planting and landscape scheme can be found on the Staff Parking Proposed Site Plan (Drawing no. 071 Rev A). This details the proposed beech hedging which will provide a natural screening edge to the car park to reduce any visual prominence. This drawing also shows the new position for trees to the northwest and south east of the proposed car park.
- 6.10 Further to the soft landscaping and native planting, the car park incorporates surface treatments that reflect the local vernacular, using permeable surfacing and sustainable drainage to support green and blue infrastructure objectives. A detailed drainage plan has been submitted in support of this application (Drawing no. CON001-DRA-AS-001).

Design and Siting

- 6.11 The site currently accommodates two principal parking areas shown on the proposed Block Plans for extant permissions PL/2023/04076 and PL/2024/02281: the approved staff parking zone, which provides 17 spaces, and the private parking area located to the south east, closer to the main estate building (providing 16 spaces) and accessed via the new estate driveway approved under Phase 4 (PL/2024/02281).
- 6.12 A review of all existing parking arrangements across the estate has been undertaken to determine whether the additional staff parking requirement could be met without creating a new or expanded parking area. While this approach would avoid introducing further hardstanding, it would generate a series of operational, security, landscape and heritage impacts that make it an unsuitable solution.
- 6.13 Figure 3 below shows the existing parking and operational arrangements on site. The area shaded in white represents the Client and Operational Zone. This designated zone functions as a constantly active working environment, with daily movements and essential estate activities taking place throughout the day. As a result, none of the available spaces within this area can reasonably or safely be used for permanent staff parking. Regular deliveries of supplies and equipment are made to the main house and multiple other buildings within the estate, requiring space for vehicles to unload, weigh and distribute goods.
- 6.14 The area outside Building B14 is routinely used by the shoot team, who prepare vehicles, equipment and guest kit ahead of shoot days. The gardening team also operate across the estate on a daily basis, using small utility vehicles to transport tools and materials, and requiring flexible access to different parts of the Operational Zone. In addition, ongoing maintenance works across the estate frequently necessitate the presence of contractor vans or estate vehicles positioned close to the buildings where repairs are being undertaken.
- 6.15 The estate maintenance team rely on these spaces throughout the day to move equipment, materials, staff and supplies between buildings, resulting in continuous short-stay operational movements. Collectively, these activities mean that the Operational Zone functions as a dynamic and heavily utilised working area, with no capacity to accommodate permanent staff parking without compromising essential estate operations, safety or efficiency.
- 6.16 The dedicated private car park that falls within this zone is reserved exclusively for the client's private guests, particularly on shoot days. This area serves the principal estate buildings, residents, guests, and private functions, and forms an intentional part of the formal arrival sequence. It is therefore not suitable to accommodate the additional required staff parking.



Figure 4: Map of the existing and approved car parks and the Client and Operational Zone at Conholt

- 6.17 All other areas within this zone (including immediately west of the main property and at the service yard) must remain free of any forms of long stay parking to ensure they are available for operational requirements. Allowing staff parking here would not only present a security risk (as all staff are required to sign in on entry and park in a dedicated location) but would also introduce additional activity, visual clutter, and circulation pressures that would erode the quality and privacy of this setting. It would also place operational demands directly within the setting of heritage assets, contrary to the expectations of Core Policy 58, which requires development to conserve and enhance the significance of historic buildings and their surroundings.
- 6.18 Parking areas located further away, such as those at Middle Conholt, are not a practical or sustainable option for staff working at Conholt. These locations are too distant from the operational core of the estate and could introduce unnecessary traffic into sensitive parts of the estate and undermine both operational efficiency and landscape tranquillity.
- 6.19 The proposed location therefore represents the most appropriate and sustainable solution for accommodating the additional staff parking requirement. It is positioned immediately adjacent to the existing approved staff parking, allowing all day to day operational parking to be consolidated in a single, discreet part of the estate. This avoids dispersing vehicles across the wider landscape and prevents any encroachment into the Client and Operational Zone or the setting of heritage assets.
- 6.20 The site is already influenced by built form and activity, meaning the introduction of additional parking here will have the least landscape and visual impact. It also ensures that staff can park close to the operational core of the estate without generating unnecessary vehicle movements through more sensitive areas. Parking further away from this location would lead to the need for additional routes and potential lighting to ensure safe access for all staff. The introduction of parking elsewhere

could also have greater ecological implications and landscape impacts. A consolidated location for parking minimises these impacts.

- 6.21 The private guest car park to the south and other locations within the site would continue to serve their intended functions, while the proposed new area would provide a dedicated, well located facility for full time staff who are required on site daily.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 6.22 This application is submitted under Section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. As a retrospective application, it falls outside the scope of the statutory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirement introduced under the Environment Act 2021 and implemented through Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act.
- 6.23 The BNG regulations apply only to prospective development, defined as development that has not yet commenced at the point of determination. Government guidance confirms that retrospective applications made under Section 73A are not subject to mandatory BNG, as the development has already taken place and therefore cannot deliver measurable pre- and post-development biodiversity value in the manner required by the statutory metric.
- 6.24 On this basis, the proposal is exempt from the requirement to deliver a 10% biodiversity net gain, and no statutory BNG calculation or off-site compensation is required. This position is consistent with the legislative framework and current national guidance on the application of BNG to retrospective permissions.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The proposed staff car park represents a necessary, proportionate and policy-compliant enhancement to the estate's operational infrastructure. The development directly supports the objectives of Core Policy 48 (with particular accordance with 'Improving access to services and improving infrastructure') by enabling staff to access their place of work safely and reliably, improving internal circulation across the estate, and sustaining the day-to-day functioning of an important rural employer. Its careful siting and design ensure that it will not give rise to adverse effects on landscape character, the local environment or residential amenity.
- 7.2 The landscape-led approach underpinning the scheme ensures compliance with Core Policy 51. By locating the car park within an existing envelope of activity, its visual and spatial impact is minimised, while the use of native planting, permeable surfacing and sensitive boundary treatments ensures that the development integrates seamlessly into its surroundings and contributes positively to biodiversity and nature recovery objectives.
- 7.3 An assessment of alternative locations has demonstrated that no other part of the estate can accommodate the required parking without generating unacceptable operational, landscape or heritage impacts. The chosen site is therefore the only practical and sustainable option, avoiding intrusion into the Client and Operational Zone, safeguarding the setting of heritage assets in accordance with Core Policy 58, and preventing unnecessary vehicle movements through more sensitive areas of the estate.

- 7.4 Overall, the proposal delivers clear functional, environmental and landscape benefits while safeguarding the special qualities of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. Any limited impacts are fully mitigated and are outweighed by the operational and policy-aligned benefits of providing safe, reliable access to a remote rural estate that supports a significant number of employees.
- 7.5 In rural areas, where employment opportunities are more dispersed and public transport provision is limited, the ability for staff to travel to work safely and efficiently is a key component of sustaining the local economy. By ensuring that employees can access their workplace without conflict, delay or safety risk, the development directly contributes to the resilience of the estate as a major rural employer and, in turn, to the wider socio-economic wellbeing of the surrounding communities.
- 7.6 In light of these considerations, the development represents a proportionate and sustainable enhancement to the estate's infrastructure and merits the full support of the Local Planning Authority.

Engagement with the Local Planning Authority

- 7.7 This planning statement has been prepared to assist the Local Planning Authority in the determination of the application with regard to national and local planning policy. However, in the event that the Local Planning Authority should wish to discuss any element of the scheme, including potential amendments, the applicants would welcome a discussion prior to the determination of the application. Correspondence can be sent to Whaleback via the contact details set out below.

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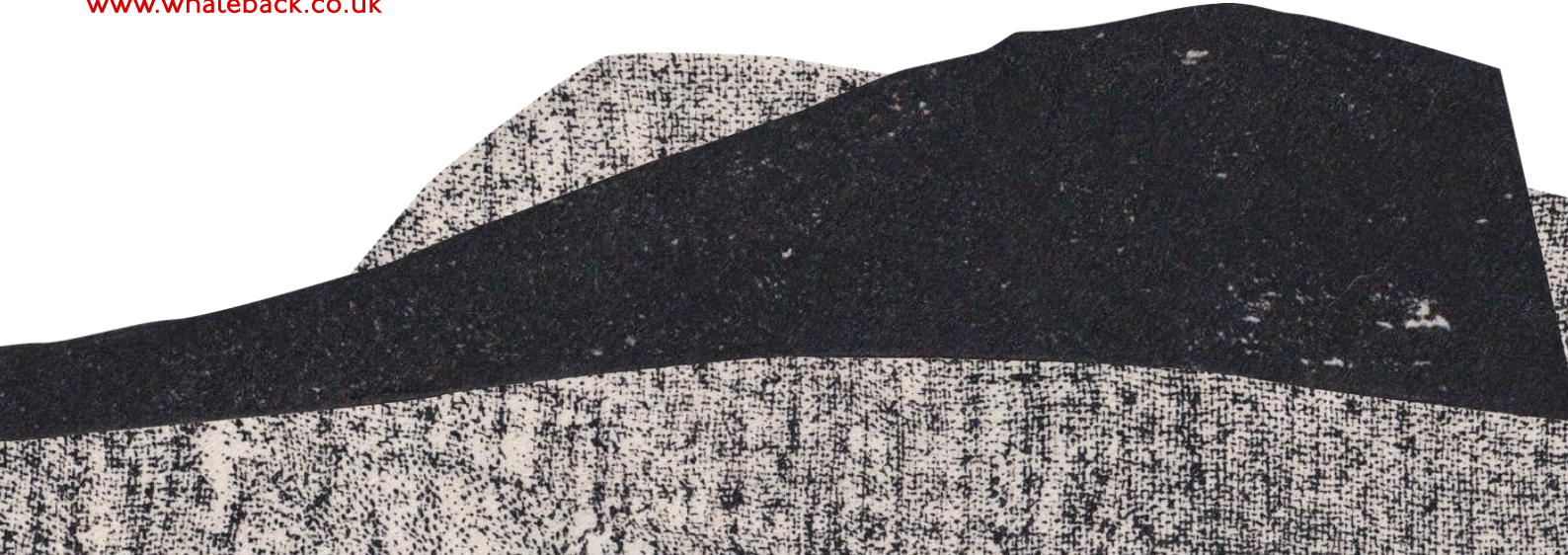
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An abstract graphic at the bottom of the page depicts the dorsal fin and tail of a whale. The whale's back is represented by a dark, textured area, while the surrounding water is shown with a lighter, grainy texture. The whale is oriented horizontally, with its tail and fin extending towards the right side of the frame.