



RCC TOWN PLANNING CONSULTANCY



Proposal: Overarching planning statement relating to planning applications at two different sites to enable the relocation of existing architect's office.

On behalf of: PKA Architects Limited

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RCC TOWN PLANNING CONSULTANCY

PLANNING STATEMENT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicants to support their two related planning applications, each at a different site, to facilitate the relocation of an existing successful local architectural firm.
- 1.2 The first application concerns the ceasing of the existing architects' office use, at 'Featherbrook', Whistley Rd, Potterne, Devizes, SN10 5TD. The office building is currently adjoining the front of a domestic dwelling, is situated within its residential curtilage and has an internal link through to the principal dwelling. The intention is for use of this building to revert to ancillary domestic use.
- 1.3 The second application concerns the construction of a new office building, to replace the loss of the existing office to enable relocation of existing local architectural practice to land opposite 49 Potterne Wick, Potterne, SN10 5QW, on the opposite side of the same village. Utilising an existing access into the site, the proposed new building would be built to Passivhaus standards and include the necessary parking and associated works.
- 1.4 This statement will consider the particular circumstances the practice now finds itself in and discusses the ongoing use of the existing office building as ancillary domestic use, explaining why this is entirely logical and reasonable in planning terms with particular regard to the reasoning for the original restrictions.
- 1.5 Further, it examines how the proposed new office development relates to the site and its context. It provides an explanation and justification for the office replacement scheme, having regard to national, local and neighbourhood plan policy and guidance.
- 1.6 It is submitted alongside the following supporting reports:
 - Drainage Strategy by Dixon Civils Ltd
 - Transport Report by PFA Consulting Ltd
 - Design and Access Statement supplied by the applicants
 - Preliminary Ecology Report and Biodiversity Net Gain Statement by BN Ecology Ltd



2.0 BACKGROUND TOGETHER WITH ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED CHANGE OF EXISTING OFFICE BUILDING TO ANCILLARY DOMESTIC USE.

- 2.1 The proposals relate to an existing successful local architectural practice which is presently based at 'Featherbrook', Whistley Lane, Potterne. Planning permission was originally granted in 2006 at the site for the business founder, Peter Kent, for an office building adjoining the front of his home, to suit the needs of his family-run architectural practice, which he commenced in 1988, and has been based in Potterne since 1991.
- 2.2 At the time permission was granted for its present office, alongside Peter, the firm employed Peter's wife, Clare, as the Finance Manager. The firm also employed Peter's son, Tom Kent, who now heads up the firm, along with Mark Clifford; a locally based architect who remains with the practice and is now Associate Director. Additionally, the firm employs Caroline and Stuart, who are also locally-based architects and who have been with the firm for a number of years.
- 2.3 Peter and Clare have recently retired, and it is now no longer practicable for the office to continue running from their family home. The office building is located at the approach to their home and shares its access, parking area and has a physical link through to the main house, with views directly onto its principal garden areas.
- 2.4 The original planning permission (planning reference K/55081/F – See Appendix A) was subject to a planning condition (number 14) which restricted its use to an architectural practice office linked to the main house and for no other use, so as to enable the local planning authority to consider any future change of use. This was in order to allow the local planning authority to assess two specific matters relating to any future change of use;
 - i) whether it will result in an increase in traffic or
 - ii) The loss of the live-work unit that the proposal as a whole provides, as set out in the reason for that condition.
- 2.5 Peter and Clare wish to continue living at Featherbrook and therefore propose its use to revert to ancillary domestic use in association with their main dwelling. This would not prevent its use by subsequent occupants as an ancillary office for their own use (live-work unit), nor would it prevent its intended use by the existing owners for their own purposes, including use by visiting friends and family. It would, however, serve the purpose of preventing its use (without a further grant of planning permission) for other uses which may possibly have other impacts the Council will wish to consider.
- 2.6 In assessing this against the two particular matters set out in the condition reason, the proposed use would in fact, *reduce* traffic movements below the existing and would not prevent its future use as a true ancillary home office for use by future owner-occupiers. As such, we do not consider there can be any particular objection to this application.



- 2.7 However, the knock-on impact is that this valuable local rural employer, which makes an important contribution to the local rural and wider economy, must find a new base.
- 2.8 In this regard, the original office building was designed by the applicants to showcase their ability to design high-quality environments. The building employed sustainable design features so as to be highly efficient, whilst providing a delightful working environment which successfully integrated the outdoor environment, all set within a building envelope that responded well to its surroundings. Built into the earth and employing the latest technologies available at that time, it has proven to be an integral element of the business's 'brand', effectively acting as a 'showroom' and discussion point for meetings with clients. It has also proven to provide the ideal working environment, limiting journeys for the family and its employees who are all locally based, and has embedded the true family culture and values within its fabric, an ethos the business is very keen to retain.
- 2.9 As such, and with the business now headed up by Peter's son, Tom, the proposal is for a similar approach to be taken to land directly opposite 49 Potterne Wick; the home, where Tom lives, with a sensitively designed new office building.
- 2.10 Since 2006, expectations and standards have moved on and the loss of the existing office provides an opportunity for its new base to be designed using the latest technologies and design techniques to provide a comfortable, inspiring, efficient and creative environment, suited to the needs of this forward-thinking architectural practice under its current Director.
- 2.11 The practice is renowned for its high-quality sustainable architecture, including both new and conversion schemes, often with a contemporary take. Their passion for sustainability, design and the landscape is evidenced throughout their work, and is especially fitting for the local rural area. The firm specialise in designing to the Passivhaus standard and the proposed building is no exception. We encourage readers to consider the Design and Access Statement, plans and Computer-Generated Images which provide further explanation as to the Passivhaus Standard, how each element is addressed by the proposed scheme and demonstrates the design response to the environment.
- 2.12 In sustainability terms, the proposal would emulate the existing 'live-work unit' arrangement as the land is owned in conjunction with the Practice Director's house opposite. Whilst the locations of the future employees cannot be controlled, the practice has an established track record in providing long-term roles to locally based architects, and the proposal would provide a local solution that would be closer to existing employees than their existing office.

3.0 SITE & CONTEXT

- 3.1 The proposed site for the new architect's office is located at the hamlet of Potterne Wick, which forms the eastern part of the village of Potterne. The site is situated on land which is directly opposite the Practice Director's home and is just a short distance (c.500m) off the main A360 which links Devizes to Salisbury and beyond, providing excellent access for both the practice's small number of employees and easy access by clients.
- 3.2 The site lies wholly within a low Flood Risk Zone (FRZ1) and is not affected by any landscape or heritage designations, either on the site or in the vicinity. Whilst the site is situated within the wider buffer for the Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area, this is only relevant to new residential development. The area is not in an area where nutrient neutrality is required and there is only one public footpath located near the site (POTT16), which runs across the middle of the adjacent paddock to the southwest in a north-south direction.
- 3.3 In this location, the site very much feels a part of the hamlet, with the road having a well-maintained and domestic yet verdant appearance. This is principally established by residential uses set within large plots on the northern side of the road, which is bounded by hedging and verges in between domestic driveways. Land to the south is characterised by low-key development and a variety of different land uses, set amongst paddocks, again with roadside hedges and verges. Mature trees and areas of woodland within the wider locality, provide a verdant backdrop and limit longer range views back towards the site. Uses within the immediate area include allotments, farms, a previous permission for a holiday let, a scout centre and agricultural/ smallholding uses along with low density residential development.



Figure 1: Showing spatial context of site.

- 3.4 Nearby residential buildings are mostly single storey or modest two storey buildings, located on higher land north of the road within large gardens, whilst south of the road, where the application site is situated, the land slopes quite

sharply down from the road, and there are various low-key buildings set within larger parcels of land.

- 3.5 On land southwest of the site, there is a timber clad barn along with shelters and other paraphernalia on more open land. The outline of the scout centre buildings, can also be seen beyond the field, left of centre.

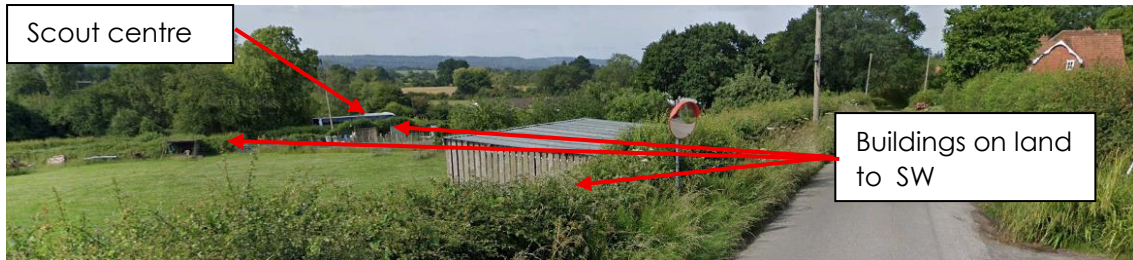


Figure 2: Looking along the road which fronts the site towards the southwest

- 3.6 On land directly to the northeast, there is a former agricultural building as shown in Figure 3 below, with previous permission for conversion to holiday let together with parking. In more recent years, it has been given consent to convert to a dwelling. Beyond this building, the tarmacadamed driveway on the right provides access into the Practice Director's home, whilst the existing vehicular access on the left would be utilised to provide access into the site, minimising any impacts on vegetation and surroundings.



Figure 3: Showing building on adjacent land NE of site

- 3.7 The site itself is no exception and already contains a single storey shed building and a small greenhouse which would be removed and replaced by the new office building as shown in figure 4 below. Notably, the existing visual amenity of the site is somewhat diminished by the power lines which run through it as shown below. However, unlike neighbouring land which has a more open character between the mature boundary hedges, the application site is extremely well-vegetated, with a verdant appearance largely as a result of trees and other vegetation close to its boundaries. By providing a low-key building set amongst this established and new landscaping which responds to these surroundings in scale, form and finishes, the proposed development would be extremely

discrete and the appearance and character of the site and its surroundings would be maintained.

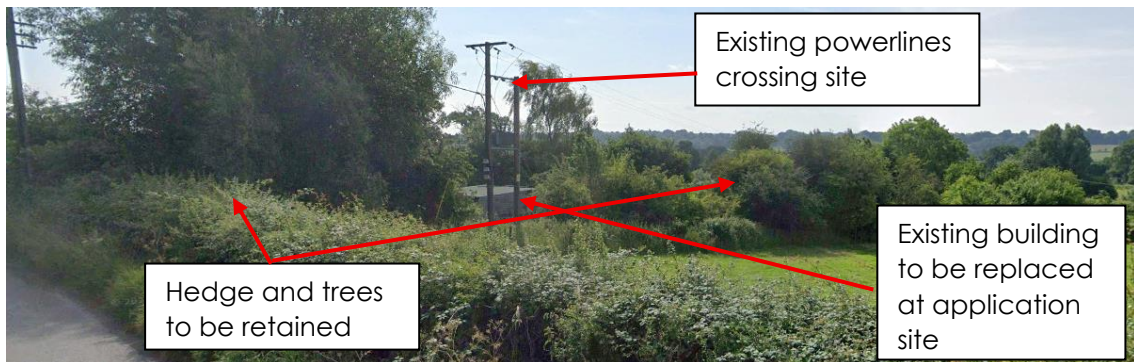


Figure 3: High level view looking above hedge towards application site



Figure 4: Showing view towards existing site, taken just beyond the adjacent agricultural building

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1 At the national level, the newly published National Planning Policy Framework, August 2026 (Framework), is the most up to date planning document and the foremost material consideration. This is supplemented with the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) which adds clarification to the Framework.
- 4.2 Whilst the Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015 (WCS) and its associated Supplementary Planning Documents continue to serve as the Development Plan, the WCS was adopted in 2015 to cover the Plan period only up to 2026. The WCS continues to reference a small number of 'saved policies' from the former Kennet Local Plan (KLP) 2011.
- 4.3 The Potterne Neighbourhood Plan was formally 'made' in 2017. As a community produced document with formal status, it is also relevant as part of the Development Plan, although it is now also of some age.

- 4.4 The Wiltshire Revised Local Plan, intended to replace the WCS to cover the following period, has now been withdrawn following the Inspectors' recommendations that it was effectively found to be unsound, and it can no longer be considered an emerging plan with any status. The Council have committed to commencing the plan-making process once again, but the earliest projections are for this to be in place are for mid-2029 and at present, this remains at a very early, pre-draft stage.
- 4.5 Other policy considerations comprise the following:
- Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 Car Parking Strategy
 - The Wiltshire Design Guide (2024)
- 4.6 The relevant policies and guidance are set out in the associated tables overleaf:

WILTSHIRE CORE STRATEGY

4.7

Policy	Title
CP1	Settlement strategy
CP2	Delivery strategy
CP12	Spatial Strategy for the Devizes Community Area
CP34	Additional Employment Land
CP50	Biodiversity and Geodiversity
CP51	Landscape
CP57	Ensuring high-quality design and place shaping
CP60	Sustainable transport
CP61	Transport and new development
CP67	Flood Risk

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

4.8 Whilst there are no directly relevant NP policies, paragraph C8 on commercial uses, notes the significant number of local (often discrete) businesses, providing notable employment, and contributing to its economy.

It states *'The village has a vibrant, albeit discrete, business community with many businesses run from homes. There are at least 116 businesses, 60 of these each supporting at least one full-time occupation...'*

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (August 2026)

Chapter	Title
3	Decision-making policies
4	Achieving sustainable development
5	Meeting the challenge of climate change
7	Building a strong, effective economy
10	Securing clean energy and water
12	Making effective use of land
14	Achieving well-designed places
15	Promoting sustainable transport
17	Managing flood risk and coastal change
18	Conserving and enhancing the natural environment



5.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT FOR PROPOSED NEW OFFICE

5.1 The main planning issues to be discussed are:

- Principle of the proposed use in this location with particular reference to this proposal being a direct replacement for a similar use located at Whistley Lane, Potterne.
- Exceptional architectural design, embedding the latest sustainable development techniques and technologies to meet the Passivhaus standard and to help tackle climate change directly and to inspire others to pursue a sustainable design approach
- Visual and landscape impact, ecology and biodiversity net gain
- Access, highway impacts and transportation
- Residential amenity

Principle of Development

5.2 The Wiltshire Core Strategy remains the starting point for decision-making. The Strategy is firmly an economic -led strategy, seeking to balance the number of jobs with housing, so as to help reduce out-commuting beyond the County, and to strengthen its economic base. This includes a desire to move towards higher-value industries, prioritising creative industries and business services, such as this, amongst others. This is confirmed within strategic objective 1 of the WCS and supporting text at 6.10.

5.3 Furthermore, against the backdrop of generally seeking to direct new development towards the larger settlements, the Development Plan clearly recognises the importance of existing rural-based businesses and the important contribution they make to the rural economy and through the provision of local jobs. This proposal entirely fits with these aims.

5.4 Core Policy 43 is the principal employment policy. Outside of the Principal Settlements, Market Towns and Local Service Centres, it offers particular support for 'iii) new and existing rural based businesses within or adjacent to Large and Small Villages.'

5.5 In this regard, whilst the site lies close to Potterne, which is designated as a Large Village, and is also just 3km from the Market Town of Devizes, it is also relevant that the existing office occupies a similar position outside of the village boundary to its existing office location, and that this scheme is simply a direct replacement for that building which is no longer available.

5.6 CP43 then goes on to list five further criteria for such developments to be assessed against, stating they should be supported where they;

a) *Meet sustainable development objectives as set out in the policies of this Core Strategy*

As explained above, the proposed site is a direct replacement for another situated outside of Potterne, in a similar type of location. It is in fact, a more



sustainable location than the existing base, being sited opposite the Practice Director's own house, who would walk to site, and situated centrally between the other long-term employees who live locally; one of whom lives in Potterne and the other two, in nearby Market Lavington. One of the four employees currently cycles to work and the new location would be equally accessible to them by cycle.

Additionally, the site affords better access to frequent bus services serving Devizes, Salisbury, Trowbridge, the Lavingtons and local villages, with the nearest stop located at the junction with Potterne Wick. It is also preferred over the existing site, providing a safer and shorter access to a main trunk route (the A360), than the existing base at Whistley Lane.

In economic terms, the business provides employment for 4 locally based architects, making an important contribution to the local economy. It is essential that a new base can be found which meets the needs of the business, to ensure it can continue its success. As outlined above, the proposed location means that commutes would absolutely be minimised and the Practice Director would effectively have a live-work arrangement. As explained above, the work environment is key for this practice; the loss of their current office, now provides an opportunity for their new bespoke office to be constructed to once again showcase the latest in sustainability standards and cutting edge high-quality design, in order to address current business needs and to capture the imaginations of both employees and clients.

In environmental and socially sustainable terms, the proposal has been designed to offer exemplary design and performance, not only in terms of its sustainability credentials as set out in the applicant's Personal, Sustainability and Design & Access Statement, but also through offering spaces to employees and clients which are designed to promote health and wellbeing, alongside the creative environment necessary to encourage architectural flair.

The development scheme has carefully considered the immediate surroundings and wider environment so as to retain all key species, minimise any harms and reinforce landscaping and biodiversity. Moreover, through their ongoing work promoting a sustainable design approach, including for example, through Passivhaus accreditation, the practice envisages that their new office will encourage clients to pursue similar high standards, helping to reduce carbon emissions across the area and raising the standards of architecture more generally.

- b) Are consistent in scale with their location, do not adversely affect nearby buildings or the area or detract from residential amenity*

The scale of the proposed building has been kept purposely low-key, utilising a single storey design of just 84 square metres, with a gently pitching living green roof. Being set down from the road, its scale and form is entirely fitting for the area and would clearly not adversely affect nearby buildings. The site and context discussion at section 3.0 has shown the mature, landscaped setting for the site, which would be retained, save for a few small examples which would be replaced elsewhere on the site. This, together with the very limited public viewpoints, would ensure the area is not adversely affected. The proposal is suitably distanced from residences to ensure amenity is preserved.

- c) Are supported by evidence they are required to benefit the local economic and social needs*

As set out above, the business now has no choice but to relocate. A high-quality working environment is essential to attract and retain staff, to provide peaceful and creative working conditions and to inspire clients to choose to work alongside the practice to develop their projects. The office building effectively acts as the business's showroom, and is a critical part of its branding, being able to directly showcase to clients the design quality that can be achieved. This is simply not offered by any standard office premises available locally.

Moreover, the business is long-established, with a firm economic footing, and provides employment for four locally-based architects. Suitable new premises are now required to help ensure the ongoing success of this business and its continued contribution to the local economy. The space has been designed to allow for social interaction and break-out spaces for employees, comfortable meeting spaces for clients and connections with nature, to address these needs.

- d) Would not undermine the delivery of strategic employment allocations.*

This proposal is for a modest office building only, to suit the needs of an existing rural-based business which now needs to relocate. It would clearly not undermine any allocations.

- e) Are supported by adequate infrastructure*

The site can be serviced by mains water, and electricity and fibre broadband are readily available. Indeed, the broadband at the proposed site is significantly better than at Featherbrook with fibre broadband on the pole

outside the site. The practice relies on a 5G connection at present and this does cause problems with modern computing, cloud storage and large files.

Foul drainage would be dealt with by means of a package treatment plant whilst surface water drainage infrastructure would be to a small attenuation basin with outfall to ditch, providing betterment over existing greenfield run-off rates. The site benefits from an existing access, with ample parking and turning to be provided on site and the site is readily accessible from the A360. Consequently, the site is well-supported by suitable infrastructure.

- 5.7 In next considering the proposal against the new National Decision-Making Policies contained in the recently published Framework, Annex A confirms that where local plan policies are materially inconsistent with the NDM policies of the Framework, they can only carry very limited weight, effectively giving primacy to the new NDM Policies.
- 5.8 NDM Policy S3 presumes in favour of permitting sustainable developments, whilst NDM Policy S5 helps define what forms of development are considered sustainable in locations which are outside of settlements, which would include this site.

Listed acceptable forms of development include: *'1 b. Development for rural businesses and services, including tourism, where a location outside settlements is shown to be necessary;'*

This statement has reasoned that this proposal amounts to the relocation of an existing business from one side of Potterne village to the other. It has evidenced why the proposed location is now more sustainable than the existing. Furthermore, it has explained how a bespoke new office building immersed into this discrete landscaped site, shall act as a 'showroom' for the practice's work, demonstrating how buildings can work in harmony with the landscape and the importance of connections with nature. In this way, it is the site's position and character which makes it especially suitable, allowing the new office to make an intrinsic contribution to the ongoing success of the business, whilst providing the high-quality working environment necessary for creativity, health and well-being, values which are embedded into the business and its work. Additionally, because the land is already owned by the Practice Director, and with the proposal being designed to Passivhaus standards, the economic costs to the business both initially and over its lifetime, will be minimised. All of these factors contribute to why this particular location, located close to but outside of the settlements, is now crucial for the needs of this business.

- 5.9 Whilst we consider the proposal complies with 1b) as reasoned above, NDM Policy S5 also allows exceptions to be granted as set out in 4. *'in exceptional circumstances, where the benefits of the proposal would substantially outweigh the adverse effects, including to the character of the countryside and in relation*



to promoting sustainable patterns of movement.' In this instance, we would also submit that the benefits of approving this proposal would clearly far outweigh any adverse effects; there would be no notable adverse effect on the character of the countryside and this statement has evidenced why the proposed location is highly sustainable for this particular business and far more sustainable than any town location or indeed its existing location.

5.10 NDM Policy E2 must also be factored here. This states that:

'1. To support business growth, substantial weight should be given to:

a. The economic benefits of proposals for commercial development which allow businesses to invest, expand and/or adapt.... '

Again, we submit that the proposal will clearly allow this existing business to adapt and invest and that the nature of the office building will support its future economic growth.

5.11 NDM Policy E4 sets out that (our emphasis underlined): *'1. In applying policy E2, the sustainable growth of businesses in rural areas should be supported, including through: a. The conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*

5.12 It later continues to recognise that *'2. Development proposals to meet business needs in rural areas may need to be located outside settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances:*

a. Development proposals should take opportunities, where they exist, to use previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing development; and

b. The siting and design of development should be appropriate having regard to the character of its surroundings.

5.13 The proposed new site does have reasonable access to public transport, and whilst is located outside the (out-dated) settlement boundary for Potterne, this statement has already reasoned why the site represents an inherently sustainable location for this particular business. This statement has evidenced, as outlined in the site context at Section 2.0 above, that the site is indeed physically well-related to existing development in the locality and how its siting and design is entirely appropriate for the character of the area.

5.14 Consequently, whilst planning policies in general seek to concentrate business development at the larger settlements, this submission has explained why the proposal accords with policy documents, taken as a whole, and has provided a clear and substantiated justification for why a location at one of the larger settlements would not in fact represent a suitable or indeed 'a more sustainable location', having regard to locational, economic, social and environmental factors relevant to this business.

5.15 Moreover, it is highly relevant that this is not for a wholly new, or untested business, but the relocation of an existing established village business based on the north of Potterne to shift to a similar location but now to the southeast of the

village. The new location has shown to be locationally similar (but preferable to) the existing location in terms of sustainability and will minimise commuting distances for all employees. As such, strict application of 'one-size-fits-all' policies which do not take account of the specific situation, is not appropriate here.

- 5.16 Finally, this submission, as outlined in Sections 2.0 and 3.0 above, along with the remainder of this assessment and supporting reports, explain why there would be no other notable adverse impacts which would outweigh the benefits of approving this proposal in the planning balance.

Exceptional architectural design, embedding the latest sustainable development techniques and technologies to meet the Passivhaus standard

- 5.17 The design proposal embodies exemplary sustainable design, with a view to directly minimising impacts on the environment, whilst providing a high-quality, functional workspace. The supporting Personal/ Design and Access Statement provided by the applicant-designer identifies the specific design features and technologies employed to achieve the minimisation of embodied carbons, renewable energy technologies and sustainable design techniques.
- 5.18 The building is designed to achieve Passivhaus standard, which is a rigorous, performance-based standard for energy-efficient buildings. The approach is based on reducing energy demand through a highly insulated and airtight building envelope, minimising thermal bridging, using high-performance windows, controlling solar gains, limiting overheating and providing mechanical ventilation with heat recovery.
- 5.19 Constructed in this manner, not only will the development itself be incredibly 'green', but it will be used to promote the use of these high standards in client builds.
- 5.20 This accords with the drive towards the objective to support the transition to net zero by 2050 set out within various NDM policies of the Framework.
- 5.21 This includes at Chapter 5, support for proposals which will help mitigate climate change and adaptation to climate change, reinforced by the sustainability of the location for this particular business, and the building's design. Not only would the building be constructed to rigorous Passivhaus standard, which relies on a 'fabric first' approach, orientation and airtight construction with MVHR to minimise energy use and maximise comfort, but the applicants are also choosing to construct the office in a more environmentally conscience way, by considering embodied carbon and water use, including through minimising concrete use and using a lightweight timber frame. Furthermore, the proposals incorporate appropriate use of renewable technology for the production of energy to help meet the building's minimal energy requirements.
- 5.22 Policies CC2, CC3 set out that substantial weight should be given to these matters, and this is again echoed in Chapter 10 at NDM Policy W3, for renewable and low carbon energy development and electricity network infrastructure, which sets out that
- '1. In considering proposals for renewable and low-carbon energy development and electricity network infrastructure, **substantial weight** should be given to:*



- a. *The benefits for improving energy security, supporting economic development and/or the transition to a net zero future...and*
- c. *The contribution that small-scale and community-led renewable and low carbon energy projects can make to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, along with their associated economic and social benefits.'*

5.23 Consequently, the proposal accords with Chapters 5, 10 and 14 of the Framework, Policy CP57 of the WCS and the Wiltshire Design Guide. Indeed, the Framework confirms substantial weight to be apportioned to these matters.

Visual and landscape impact, ecology and biodiversity net gain

- 5.24 Section 3.0 of this statement provides a visual and contextual analysis of the site including photographs from various viewpoints along with explanations evidencing the discreteness of the site in visual and landscape terms. This is supplemented by commentary on the design approach, including as set out within the applicant's Personal/ DAS document and the CGI's which aid visual assessment and demonstrate the vast majority of the site would be retained as landscaped setting, including existing trees, shrubs and wild-flower meadow.
- 5.25 Indeed, whilst the site is not within a designated landscape area, as a result of the established landscape setting, coupled with the low-key sensitive design of the building and its surroundings, the proposals will be incredibly well-integrated with its downslope and landscaped position, such that they will be barely discernible from most viewpoints. A transient view of the parking area and modest north elevation may be possible from the road north of the site but any views would be screened by the existing dense boundary hedges and trees, and would be further filtered by on site landscaping. Similarly, other glimpse views of the building may be possible between existing vegetation, but these would be tantamount to views of the existing building, and even these will be mitigated to a very high-degree by the landscaping and the design and finishes of the building which includes a green roof and dark, non-reflective walls.
- 5.26 As a result of these factors, it is considered the proposal can be successfully integrated into its surroundings with no particular harm to local character or the visual amenities of the area.
- 5.27 Furthermore, the application includes a Preliminary Ecological Assessment undertaken by BN Ecology, which has considered all existing ecological potential on site and proposed recommendations along with mitigation and enhancement measures which shall be incorporated into the proposals. No notable ecological features were identified and therefore, the proposals should not harm but will enhance ecology. Additionally, BN Ecology have also confirmed that being under 0.2 hectares in area and with no priority habitats affected, the proposals benefit from BNG exemption.
- 5.28 The proposals therefore accord with Chapters 14 & 19 of the Framework and CP50, CP51 and CP57 of the WCS.



Access, highway impacts and transportation

- 5.29 The site benefits from an existing vehicular access onto the road leading through Potterne Wick and is c. 500 metres from its junction with the A360 trunk route. A transport note from PFA Consulting Ltd, has considered the suitability of this route and the proposed access to take the traffic associated with the proposed development and has concluded the proposals would not be detrimental to highway safety.
- 5.30 Moreover, this statement has already set out why the site is considered locationally sustainable for this particular relocation, having regard to where staff live, nearby main roads and a nearby bus stop which is well served by regular services.
- 5.31 The proposals incorporate 5 parking spaces together with adequate turning to ensure that vehicles can arrive and egress in a forward gear which is considered ample to serve the proposed office use. As already noted, the business employs 4 architects, one of whom ordinarily cycles and one lives opposite the site and would not need a car. Cycle parking facilities will be provided within the site as part of the proposed development. A shower facility is also proposed within the office to support and encourage staff who choose to cycle, walk or run to work.
- 5.32 It is estimated that there are no more than approximately three to four external meetings at the office per month. Consequently, visitor-related traffic generation is expected to be very limited and would have no material effect on the overall level of traffic using Potterne Wick.
- 5.33 The proposed office will therefore generate a very low level of traffic, with half of the staff journeys being undertaken by sustainable modes of transport. Although the relocation will result in a net increase of approximately two staff vehicle movements per day compared with the current use of the site, the overall level of traffic generated will remain very low. The scale and nature of the proposed use is consistent with a small professional office and is not expected to result in any significant increase in traffic movements on the local highway network. The number of spaces is considered ample to serve the building, and the needs of the business, including space to accommodate client vehicles, within the site.
- 5.34 The proposals would clearly not have a severe adverse impact on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion, including cumulative impacts), nor would they have an unacceptable impact on highway safety. As such, the proposals accord with Chapter 15 of the Framework and CP60 and CP64 of the WCS.

Residential amenity

- 5.35 The proposed use is as an architect's office, with working hours ordinarily concentrated between normal office hours and with low-key movements such that it would be entirely compatible with adjacent residential uses. In this instance, the site is situated within a large, well-landscaped plot. The dwelling opposite belongs to the Practice Director (number 49) and the brick building with previous consent to convert to a dwelling on land to the northwest, 'turns its



back' to the application site. Other neighbours are further away and situated on higher land.

- 5.36 As a consequence, it is not considered that the proposal would have any adverse impact on residential amenity including through overshadowing or overbearing impact, loss of privacy or noise and disturbance.
- 5.37 The proposals therefore accord with Chapter 15 of the Framework and Policy CP57 of the WCS.

Drainage

- 5.38 The submission is accompanied by a foul and surface water drainage strategy provided by Dixon Civils Ltd. As noted above, the site lies wholly within a low flood risk zone and as such a flood risk assessment is not required. The proposals incorporated SuDs in the form of a permeable gravelled parking area and green roof so as to minimise run off. Soakaway testing has been carried out and shown not to work so any runoff will be directed to a small attenuation basin and released to the nearby ditch at the required betterment rate, thereby reducing the risks of flooding downstream. Foul water will be managed by package treatment plant.
- 5.39 The proposals therefore accord with Chapter 18 of the Framework and Policy CP67 of the WCS.

6.0 CONCLUSION – THE PLANNING BALANCE

- 6.1 This statement has demonstrated that the proposed replacement for the existing office premises, accords with sustainable design principles set out within the WCS and the Framework, being economically, socially and environmentally sustainable in all ways. Whilst its location is not at the policy-preferred larger settlement location, the proposals will allow the business to remain at Potterne, in a location which is central and readily accessible for all of its staff, including the Practice Director who lives opposite. Moreover, this statement has explained the particular circumstances affecting this business and why the proposed new building effectively represents a simple replacement of its existing office, located in a very similar situation, which is no longer available
- 6.2 In other policy terms, this submission has provided specific reasoning as to why development at the proposed site is considered both necessary for the business and appropriate for locality and how it successfully meets all other policy criteria. In this regard, particular reference has been made to the unique requirement for the office to effectively serve as an architectural exemplar, to inspire clients whilst providing a creative and functional space for its employees.
- 6.3 With a particular focus on sustainable development and in particular Passivhaus standard, which the proposals are designed to achieve, the scheme will not only directly contribute towards the Government's target of net zero by 2050, but it shall serve to demonstrate to clients what is achievable for their own projects. Thus, and as per Chapters 5 & 10 of the Framework, this matter ought to be attributed substantial weight by decision makers.
- 6.4 In all other respects, this statement has reasoned why the proposals have been carefully considered and designed to ensure no adverse impacts to landscape or visual amenity, drainage or flooding, highway safety or residential amenity.
- 6.5 The benefits arising are therefore considered to far outweigh any adverse impacts and the proposal ought therefore to be considered acceptable.
- 6.6 Additionally, this statement has reasoned why the proposed reversion of the existing office to ancillary domestic use in association with the dwelling to which it is linked is entirely reasonable and justified, especially having regard to the reasoning for the original condition.
- 6.7 As such, the Council is politely requested to approve these applications.