

PLANNING STATEMENT TO SUPPORT THE RESUBMISSION OF APPLICATION 23/0242



This statement outlines the six reasons for refusal of the original application and incorporates feedback from the appeal inspector. It details how these points have informed revisions to the new scheme.

COMMENTS AND AMENDMENTS ON REFUSAL:

- 1. The proposal, by reason of the site's prominent and exposed position and the isolated nature of the buildings themselves, will result in an urban intrusion into open countryside and the Wentwood Special Landscape Area and an accumulation of domestic accoutrements and associated works to the detriment of the area's rural character and appearance. This is contrary to Planning Policy Wales and policies SP5, SP8 and GP5 of the Newport Local Development Plan 2011 - 2026 (Adopted January 2015).*

The revised visual impact assessment submitted with the application provides a comprehensive evaluation from various viewpoints, demonstrating that the proposed development does not introduce a prominent urban intrusion into the open countryside or the Wentwood Special Landscape Area. Unlike other visible dwellings in the wider landscape that exhibit complex shapes and rendered facades, the proposed building maintains a low-profile presence that blends harmoniously into its rural surroundings. Screening measures, including dense hedges, trees, and natural topography, effectively mitigate any potential visual impact from adjacent public rights of way (PROW) and highway viewpoints. These elements ensure that the development integrates seamlessly with the landscape, preserving the area's rural character.

Recent discoveries from Tithe plan extracts establish the historical classification of the building as a cottage with a garden, reinforcing that the proposed development aligns with the area's original features and historical context. Rather than introducing an urban character, the application seeks to restore and enhance these authentic elements, further contributing positively to the rural landscape..

- 2. It has not been demonstrated that the applicant has made every reasonable attempt to market the building for a business re-use, the building is not capable of conversion without substantial reconstruction of the external walls and significant changes are proposed to the existing building which will affect the integrity of the existing structure. The associated residential curtilage is also not considered defensible. This is contrary to policy H10 of the Newport Local Development Plan 2011 - 2026 (Adopted January 2015).*

A professional and third party business reuse assessment was conducted that concluded that a conversion to dwelling was the most appropriate use for the building considering the current market conditions and demand. The appeal inspector made the following comments, confirming that the report is sufficient to satisfy criterion (i) of policy H10. -

"The appellant has considered alternative business/commercial uses, including tourism accommodation. I recognise that given its small size, its re-use for alternative uses would be restricted, and as accepted by the Council, the demand for small business/commercial space is limited. Furthermore, given the nature and condition of the building, a significant amount of investment and alterations would be required to facilitate an alternative business use, which would be another barrier to the feasibility of

a business use. Whilst the provision of tourist accommodation could be a suitable alternative use given its rural location, the evidence demonstrates that there is high level of other such facilities in the area. On the available evidence, and despite the lack of marketing evidence, I consider that criterion (i) of policy H10 has been satisfied"

A new structural report submitted with the application confirms that the new proposal does not require substantial reconstruction of the existing building. By attaching the extension to the side gable of the barn, the proposal will support and enhance the integrity of the existing building, safeguarding this historic asset for the future. This approach ensures minimal intervention with the original structure, preserving its historical and architectural significance.

The original Tithe plan extract supporting the application clearly defines the cottage's garden in front of the property. The new residential curtilage has been delineated with a traditional post and rail timber fence, creating a visually appropriate boundary that respects the site's historical context. Additionally, the new hardscaping around the dwelling will be visually screened by the formation of a berm planted with a wildflower seed mix. This not only enhances the biodiversity of the area but also blends the development seamlessly into the natural landscape. To further mitigate the visual impact, fruit trees will be planted along the western fence line, contributing to the rural character and providing additional ecological benefits.

3. The proposal by reason of its size, design and location would result in an unsympathetic and unduly dominant conversion that would significantly increase the size of the existing building in combination with new equestrian buildings would cause significant harm to the rural character and appearance of the countryside and the Wentwood Special Landscape Area, contrary to policies SP5, SP8, H10 and GP6 of the Newport Local Development Plan 2011 - 2026 (Adopted January 2015).

The feedback regarding the size, design, and location of the proposal has been instrumental in refining the new scheme to ensure it is more sympathetic to its surroundings. Unlike the original application, which included plans to increase the height of the barn and introduce a front extension, the revised proposal maintains the existing proportions of the building. It includes a modest side extension that adheres to the Newport SPG guidelines on side extensions by being set back from the front elevation and below the ridge line, preserving the building's low-profile character. The proposed extension represents less than 30% of the existing building volume, complying with Newport's Local Development Plan standards.

Additionally, significant revisions have been made to the scale, appearance, and location of the stables to better integrate them into the rural landscape. These adjustments ensure that the overall development is more appropriate for its setting, mitigating concerns about visual dominance and harm to the rural character and appearance of the countryside and Wentwood Special Landscape Area. By scaling back and simplifying the design, the proposal now aligns more closely with policies SP5, SP8, H10, and GP6 of the Newport Local Development Plan, emphasising sensitivity to the rural environment while still meeting the project's functional requirements, especially when considered with the findings of the VIA.

4. The proposed development has a significant adverse impact upon interests of acknowledged importance, namely trees and protected woodland and no information has been submitted to mitigate this objection to the detriment of

landscape character and visual amenity. It is also not possible to quantify biodiversity enhancement without this information. The proposed development is therefore contrary to policies GP5 and SP9 of the Newport Local Development Plan 2011 - 2026 (Adopted January 2015).

A comprehensive tree survey has been conducted, resulting in recommended safety measures and protection zones to safeguard trees, woodlands, and hedgerows of wildlife and amenity value. This approach ensures that there will be no unacceptable loss or harm to these features, aligning with the requirement to avoid, mitigate, and compensate for negative impacts on biodiversity.

Moreover, the development includes new features such as permeable grasscrete access tracks and bird/bat boxes, contributing positively to the UK, Welsh, and Newport biodiversity action plans. The design incorporates an appropriate landscape scheme that enhances both the site and its wider context, integrating green infrastructure and supporting biodiversity networks. By adhering to these principles, the proposal not only meets regulatory standards but also demonstrates a commitment to sustainable development practices as outlined in Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009). This approach ensures that the development positively contributes to the conservation, enhancement, and management of recognized sites within the natural, historic, and built environment of Newport.

5. There is a likelihood of bats being affected by the development and insufficient bat survey and mitigation information has been provided. Therefore the proposal has potential for a significant adverse effect upon interests of acknowledged importance, namely a European Protected Species. In addition, without this information it is not possible to quantify biodiversity enhancement. This is contrary to policies SP9 and GP5 of the Newport Local Development Plan 2011 - 2026 (Adopted January 2015), Planning Policy Wales edition 11 and TAN5: Nature Conservation and Planning.

A key mitigation strategy proposed with the new application is for the constructing a new standalone bat house to the north of the existing barn. This dedicated bat house has been designed in consultation with bat experts at Ecological Services Ltd. to meet the specific needs of the lesser horseshoe bats, ensuring an optimal roosting environment.

The construction of the standalone bat house will be completed and monitored for significant use by the bats before any works commence on the existing barn. This phased approach ensures that the bats have a suitable alternative roost, thereby minimising disruption and safeguarding their population.

In the planning appeal the inspector commented "it would be unreasonable to grant planning permission subject to such restrictions" in relation to however the risk and expense would be on the applicant who has already heavily invested both financially and emotionally in the scheme that they wish to take this risk, therefore we would welcome a planning condition along the line of 'Prior to the commencement of works to the barn, the bat house must be build and have evidence of significant use within a 3 year period" In doing so, planning would not be secured until the bat house was

proven successful and if for some reason it did not work, then a planning approval would not be 'nullified' as it would not be fully granted.

6. It has not been demonstrated that the proposed foul drainage system (packaged treatment plant) is feasible without harm to the environment and biodiversity. This is contrary to policies SP4 and GP5 of the Newport Local Development Plan 2011 - 2026 (Adopted January 2015).

The proposed package treatment plant with a drainage field for foul water disposal has been thoroughly assessed through percolation testing in accordance with British Standard BS6297:2007 (+A1:2008) These tests confirm that the site conditions are suitable, meeting required standards for wastewater treatment. Additionally, there was no evidence of a high water table during the assessment, further supporting the feasibility of the proposed drainage solution. The information in Welsh Government Circular 008/2018 has been followed to ensure that the package treatment plant and associated drainage field is appropriate for use.

The calculations for sewage discharge rates align with anticipated needs for the development, ensuring the system can handle the expected sewage generation without environmental compromise. This approach is in line with policy SP4 of the Newport Local Development Plan.

FINAL COMMENTS ON SCHEME:

The main objective of this scheme has always been to allow for the careful and sensitive conversion of the historic building into a very modest 1 bedroom dwelling to allow the applicant the ability to live next to and care for their narcoleptic horses.

The submitted scheme represents the culmination of extensive deliberation and refinement over the last two years, incorporating feedback from a range of professionals and experts. Through processes including pre-application consultations, a comprehensive planning application, and subsequent appeal, the scheme has evolved to address various concerns and obstacles. This final design reflects a collaborative effort to adhere to both local and national planning policies, ensuring its integration as a valued historical asset within the special landscape. The final scheme promises a substantial net gain in ecological, historical, and environmental terms.

In conclusion, we respectfully request open dialogue with the planning authorities to further discuss and potentially resolve any remaining concerns they may have regarding the proposed scheme. We believe that continued communication and cooperation will not only ensure full compliance with all regulatory requirements but also foster a positive relationship built on mutual understanding and shared objectives. We are committed to addressing any feedback constructively to achieve a harmonious integration of this project within the local community and landscape.