

Planning Supporting Statement including Design and Access and Water Management

*‘Extension and Alteration of Existing
Dwellinghouse including change of use
of part of the building from weddings
and small events back to residential use.’*

Oldcastle Farm, Evendine Lane, Colwall
Malvern, Herefordshire, WR13 6DT

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Introduction and Site Context

1. This supporting statement accompanies an application for planning permission and Listed Building consent for the extension and alteration of Oldcastle Farmhouse including a change of use from weddings and small events back to residential use (C3).
2. This is a resubmission of application reference 231678 following concerns raised by the Councils' conservation officer. This amended proposal has been prepared which reduces the overall scale and massing of the proposal. In addition, a heritage statement has been prepared by Elmwood Heritage which justifies the proposal and demonstrates that no significant harm to the Listed Building would be caused by the proposed development.
3. Oldcastle Farm Estate comprises a Grade II listed main house and group of 17th / early 18th Century cottages and farm buildings with probable 15th Century and earlier medieval origins and approximately 23 hectares (56 acres) of land of which about 18 hectares (45 acres) is open farmland and 4.5 hectares (11 acres) formal and landscaped gardens. The building is located at the end of a private drive access from the southern side of Evendine lane. (English Heritage Building ID: 151434).
4. The formal gardens have been restored by the previous owners from 2001 to NGS standard including mature architectural planting, rose gardens, specimen and mature native trees, a series of ponds and streams, formal walks and exceptional views out to the Malvern Hills and surrounding Herefordshire and Worcestershire countryside.
5. There has been extensive renovation and restoration of the historic buildings and grounds since 2001. The principal house is local stone, timber frame and clay tiles, with an adjoining linked cottage wing and a further building on the western side, referred to as "The Orangery", which was constructed from the remains of an original cider barn. This was subject of planning permission and listed building consent reference DCN073604/L and DCN073603/F in 2008. "The Orangery" is of a more modern appearance with oak frame, substantial double height glazing, local stone and clay tiles. Together the main buildings have 7 bedrooms and 4 reception rooms with ancillary accommodation.
6. Eastwards is a detached stone, timber and clay tile 'bothy' referred to as the 'Stone' house used for additional domestic accommodation. South and east are additional substantial farm buildings including a restored timber frame and oak weatherboard clad 5-bay barn considered to be late 17th /

early 18th Century and possibly of earlier origins which is Grade II listed and a 5-bay modern steel framed agricultural building and adjoining workshops. South-west is a brick and clay tiled open sheep feeder of probably 17th Century or earlier origins. These buildings are not part of this application but nevertheless form an important “picture” of the estate.

7. Beyond the main group of buildings and north-east is a former 'Wain' house of local stone and clay tile and to the north-west is a detached stone, timber frame, brick and tiled cottage used for additional domestic accommodation.
8. North of the main site is a substantial lake, which is a registered Ancient Monument and considered to be a medieval fishpond in origin, probably from the mid-11th to mid-15th Century and is possibly part of an earlier moat around the original farm.
9. Around 20% of the estate is formal garden and the remaining 18 hectares (45 acres) or so is farmed primarily for pasture and animal grazing.
10. In 2015 the previous owners gained consent for part of the estate to be used as a wedding and small events venue, both to conduct civil marriage and civil partnerships ceremonies on site and for wedding receptions and associated events. This involved using some of the western parts of the principal buildings, the orangery particularly and the immediate grounds for public events purposes while retaining private residential use in the remainder. The details of the permission can be summarised as follows: -
 - Change of use of part of domestic building.
 - The buildings on the North and West side of the main house used for assembly, reception, dining and function areas, including dedicated space within the restored orangery for marriage and registration services with the orangery licensed for civil ceremonies.
 - Venue areas to include the entrance, porch, and restored cottage buildings and leading into the orangery wing of the main house.
 - The main house was kept separate as the owners' principal residence.
 - A primary function area on the western side of “the Orangery” was achieved by the erection of a semi-permanent and purpose designed marquee on the raised terrace, which was granted permission in 2014.
 - The marquee accessed directly from the orangery through oak double doors in the west wall granted as part of the consent.

Proposal

11. The applicants purchased the property [REDACTED] and do not intend to maintain the commercial activities previously conducted from the site. As such this proposal is intended to return the relevant parts of the house back to residential use and for the marquee to be removed. Further works involve the removal of the poor-quality link structures which gained consent in 2008 with more appropriate, lightweight glass and metal structures to accentuate the original structures and better reveal the significance of the heritage assets.
12. An extension is proposed to the Northern elevation comprising a new timber framed glazed single storey extension, single-storey glass and metal extensions to the rear (S) and side (W) of “The Orangery” and the construction of subterranean garaging to the West.
13. The design rationale is to remove the poor-quality extensions and alterations that were made to support the commercial activities from the site, and to replace them with high quality and sympathetic alterations and extensions to better reveal the significance of the heritage asset and creating a more legible narrative of the building. In returning the building to its original use as a domestic property the extension and alterations proposed will provide improved amenity to present and future occupiers and ensure that the building is put to its optimum viable use.

Policy Context

14. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning decisions are taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan comprises The Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy (HLPCS) and the Cradley NDP. The National Planning Policy Framework and The National Planning Policy Guidance are both material considerations that carry substantial weight.

National Planning Policy Framework

15. National policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, supported by the National Planning Practice Guidance. The revised National Planning Policy Framework was published on 24th July 2018, updated on 19th February 2019 and most recently on 20th July 2021. The revised Framework, at paragraph 2, repeats that applications for planning permission are required to be determined in

accordance with the development plan and reinforces that the Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions.

‘Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions...’

16. The Framework sets out that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development which is explained at paragraph 11;

For decision-taking this means:

*c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay;
or*

d) 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:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole*

17. The Framework at paragraph 8 states;

‘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):

a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

The Development Plan

18. The HLPCS is a Development Plan Document which sets out strategic planning policies and detailed development management policies which are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The Plan also allocates sites for particular types of development and sets out policies on site specific requirements. It covers the period 2011-2031 and was adopted by Herefordshire Council on 16th October 2015. The following policies are relevant to this proposal and have been given due consideration in the preparation of this application: -

SS1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development

SS6 – Environmental quality and local distinctiveness

SS7 – Addressing climate change

LD1 – Landscape and townscape

LD2 – Biodiversity and geodiversity

LD3 – Green infrastructure

LD4 – Historic environment and heritage assets

SD1 – Sustainable design and energy efficiency

SD3 – Sustainable water management and water resources

SD4 – Wastewater treatment and river quality

Colwall NDP

19. The Colwall NDP forms part of the Development Plan and was adopted on 7th June 2021 and therefore forms part of the development plan. The relevant policies below have given due consideration in the preparation of the application: -

Policy CD3 Householder Development and Extensions

Policy CD4 Development in the Conservation Area and Protecting Built Heritage Assets

Policy CD8 General Design Principles for Development in the Countryside

Policy CD9 The Conversion of Farmsteads to Residential Use and the Extension of Existing Dwellings on a Farmstead

Principle of the Development

20. The proposal is for the extension and alteration of an existing dwellinghouse, as well as the change of use from weddings and small events to reinstate the residential use of the property. The rationale for the proposal is to remove the poor-quality extensions and alterations that were made to support the commercial activities from the site, and to replace them with high quality and sympathetic alterations and extensions to better reveal the significance of the heritage asset and creating a more legible narrative of the building. In returning the building to its original use as domestic property the extension and alterations proposed will provide improved amenity to present and future occupiers and ensure that the building is put to its optimum viable use. Subject to assessment of Design, the principle of the development is therefore supported by Policy LD4 of the HCSLP, Policy CD3 and CD9 of the NDP and Paragraph 197 of the Framework.

Design, Built Heritage and Residential Amenity

21. In light of the heritage associated with the site and the range of farm buildings that contribute to the setting of the grade II listed Cider House, it is important to establish the policy context. National policy in this regard is set out at Section 16 of the NPPF. Paragraph 197 requires local authorities, when determining applications, to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets. Moreover, paragraph 199 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation; the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.

22. This must all be set within the context of the statutory duties applying at Sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).
23. Policy LD4 of the HCSP and Policy CD4 of the NDP asserts, inter alia, that proposals and initiatives will be supported which conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the heritage significance and setting of the County's heritage assets, especially those elements which contribute to the distinct identity of the locality. It should also be remarked that 'setting' forms part of the significance of a listed building and is defined in the Framework as "*the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced*". Further guidance is available in the Historic England publication entitled Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 3 - The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd Edition, December 2017).
24. More generally, good design is a key theme outlined in the revised Framework as a fundamental component of sustainable development. Paragraph 126 highlights the importance of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places. Further, paragraph 130 states;

Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.*

25. Policies SS6 and LD1 of the HCSP relate to the design and the impact of new development on the environment, landscape and townscape. Policy LD1 states;

Development proposals should:

- *demonstrate that character of the landscape and townscape has positively influenced the design, scale, nature and site selection, protection and enhancement of the setting of settlements and designated areas;*

26. The application site is within the Malvern Hills AONB. The Malvern Hills AONB Building Design Guidelines, and in particular the relevant local guidance for Colwall, has been referred to in the preparation of this application.

27. A Heritage Statement has been prepared to support the application, which appropriately describes the significance of the site including the Farmhouse itself and the various ancillary buildings and barns. As mentioned previously there have been several previous consents for a variety of extensions and alterations which are considered to have been executed poorly. Previously a pastiche approach was employed as an attempt to disguise the construction date and fool the observer that the extensions were original. This attempt was poorly executed and unconvincing. The removal of these extrusions and replacement with transparent glass and metal 'link' structures, with floating roofs will re-establish the original forms of the separate buildings and their context to one another. The proposed extensions will be honest additions clearly of their time. Of particular note is the existing link extension between the main farmhouse and the building referred to as the 'cottage'. The proposal is to remove this 'link' and replace it with a glazed elements that will allow the two buildings to be read as separate buildings whilst also revealing views of the original building façade uncovering the historic fabric. Importantly, none of the works proposed involve the loss or change of any part of the historic fabric of the Listed Building.

28. The proposed single storey extension has been significantly reduced in scale and designed using lightweight frame and low reflective glazing such that it would appear subordinate to the main dwelling appear as a new addition retaining the narrative of the building. Using non reflective glazing allows the historic fabric of the host dwelling to remain legible. Care has been taken to ensure that the openings proposed would not interfere with the historic fabric of the existing building. The doorway proposed to access the extension from the 'cottage' would replace a modern window and

the historic window adjacent would be retained. The extension, due to its position and separation from the main house would appear subordinate, and the main listed Farmhouse would remain the dominant feature of the site. The use of design breaks in the form of the lightweight glazed link elements would also serve to maintain the narrative of the building with new work being clearly legible as 'new'. It is important to balance the benefits of the proposal namely the removal of the marquee and the poorly constructed extensions which will undoubtedly enhance the setting of the Listed Building. Indeed, it is worth noting that the only part of the farm that is visible from the Malvern Hills is the existing marquee which presently has a detrimental impact on the setting of the Listed Building and the AONB.

29. To the west of the farmhouse, a subterranean garage/parking area and uncovered swimming pool are proposed. The parking area would be set within the existing sloping ground with a naturally graded, green roof. This element of the proposal would also remove the large concrete paved terrace which presently houses the marquee. The Pool would sit behind the parking area on an existing sunken terrace which is well screened by the existing natural topography and mature vegetation which would be retained. As demonstrated by the submitted proposed elevations, the pool would not be visible from any vantage point.
30. The previous extensions and alterations were designed to support the commercial uses of the site which function poorly in a residential context. This proposal will achieve a layout more suited to modern day living resulting in an enhancement to the residential amenity for present and future occupants. The proposal represents high quality design that remains sympathetic to the historic fabric of the building ensuring the conservation and enhancement of the heritage asset would be achieved. It is recognised that as this is a relatively modest proposal for alterations of an individual dwelling and the positive contribution that the design of these building may have on the lives of the wider community are limited. However, the principles of high-quality design as outlined in the Framework are not reserved only for applications for large scale major developments. These fundamental principles are just as valid in small scale developments and the positive contribution that high quality design can have on the lives of single households should not be overlooked. Having regard to Section 12 of the Framework, paragraph 124 states that 'The creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve'.

31. As advocated in paragraph 196 of the Framework 'less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including securing its optimum viable use. The change of use and removal of those elements previously constructed to serve the now redundant commercial uses whilst returning the building to purely residential use, whilst enhancing its amenity for present and future occupiers, will secure the optimum viable use of the building and ensure that it is sustained.
32. The proposal includes opportunity to significantly improve the energy performance of the property. Modern energy efficiencies will be introduced throughout, with multi-leaf glazing, thermally broken frames, floor, wall and roof insulation and ventilation.
33. The correct traditional or appropriate materials will be used throughout; lime mortars and plasters, distemper paint, sheep's wool insulation, which will protect the integrity and performance of the original structures, while modern low carbon materials will be used in the new elements.
34. Drawing together all of the above, it is considered that the proposed development can be accommodated upon the site without any adverse impact upon the built heritage it contains; or upon its natural context within the AONB. The proposal is considered to meet the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and relevant policies set out in the NPPF and the HCSP, the Colwall NDP, as well as guidance published by Historic England. The proposal is considered to represent good quality design and achieve a standard of amenity that accords with the relevant development plan policies and paragraphs 126 and 130 of the NPPF.

Impact upon Highways

35. The existing access to the highway will be utilised which benefits from excellent visibility in either direction on Evendine Road, exceeding the minimum standards. The change of use from weddings and small events to residential will result in a significant decrease in traffic associated with the site. There is ample existing parking provision which will be retained and enhanced with the creation of the subterranean parking area which will also benefit the setting of the listed building by screening parked vehicles.
36. There are four Public Rights of Way in the proposal's vicinity, all public footpaths - numbers CW29, CW46, CW48 and CW49. All pass within the 45 acres of the Oldcastle Estate but none are affected

directly by the proposed site other than CW49 which follows the main access into Oldcastle farm from Evendine Lane. It is considered that the proposal will not have any significant effect on this. CW29 fringes part of the estate's eastern boundary over 1 km (0.6 miles) away; CW49 is 0.2 km (0.1 miles) and more way and CW46 is similarly distant; CW48 passes the site's western end within 50 m (160 ft) and although the nearest, is not considered to be harmed by the proposals. There would be no detrimental impact on highway safety or the local road network as a result of the proposed development in accordance with Policy SS4 of the Core Strategy, paragraphs 110, 111 and 112 of the Framework.

Flood Risk and Drainage

37. The revised Framework sets out at paragraph 167 that “when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere..” Further advice is set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance, including the use of sustainable drainage systems, at paragraph 21 of the guidance on Flood Risk and Coastal Change. This gives priority to the use of sustainable drainage systems as they are designed to control surface water run off close to where it falls, and mimic natural drainage as closely as possible. In so doing, they provide opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding; remove pollutants at source; and combine water management with green space, with associated benefits for amenity, recreation and wildlife.
38. The Environment Agency has issued standing advice regarding the need for surface water drainage information in relation to development proposals of less than 1ha in Flood Zone 1. That standing advice has been referred to in the preparation of this statement. In summary, that guidance indicates that surface water run-off must be managed to ensure that new development does not increase flood risk either on-site or elsewhere. Together with Part H of the Building Regulations 2000, it establishes a hierarchy for surface water disposal, which encourages a SUDs approach beginning with infiltration where possible.
39. It is proposed that surface water would be discharged by means of a sustainable drainage system and soakaways. Hard surfaced areas will predominantly comprise of the site access, driveway and parking area and roof areas. Ground investigation will be undertaken prior to commencement of development to assess the soil infiltration rate, depth to groundwater and to note any geotechnical implications. The infiltration rate of the ground at the site will be determined within trial pit(s).

40. Subject to suitable soil conditions following that ground investigation, those hard-surfaced areas, together with any additional areas such as patios and footways, will be constructed with permeable surfaces to allow rainwater to infiltrate naturally through the surface and into the underlying layers. The proposed dwellings will incorporate measures to reduce water consumption, such as the use of water efficient fittings and appliances, or the use of water recycling systems. Foul water will be connected to a new package treatment plant. These are detailed matters which could be addressed by a suitably worded planning condition.
41. In summary, following detailed on-site investigation, the proposal will make use of appropriate sustainable drainage measures and techniques with the objective of ensuring that run-off rates from the developed site are no greater than the rate of run-off from the existing site.

Ecology

42. A Preliminary Roost Assessment has been prepared by Lizzie Breakwell Ecologist, the report concludes as follows: -

*'No evidence of current or previous use of the former cottage, former cider barn or shed by bats was found, but the former cottage is considered to offer **low potential** for roosting bats due to the presence Potential Roost Features, including gaps beneath roof and ridge tiles, and a gap between bargeboards and masonry on the gable end.*

*In accordance with recognised guidelines, this indicates the need for **one initial dusk emergence bat survey** during the bat active season (May to September, weather-dependent) to determine the presence or likely absence of bats from the property. If bats are found to be roosting during the first nocturnal survey, a further two nocturnal surveys are likely to be required to inform the application for a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) from Natural England to allow the works to proceed.'*

43. Subject to compliance with the recommendations contained within the report, the proposed development would not have any impact on any protected species or habitat. The proposal provides opportunity for biodiversity enhancement, soft landscaping and SUDs in accordance with Policy LD2 of the HLPCS, in addition to paragraphs 174 and 180 of the Framework.

Conclusion and 'Planning Balance'

44. The proposal is for the extension and alteration of an existing dwellinghouse, as well as the change of use from weddings and small events to reinstate the residential use of the property. The rationale for the proposal is to remove the poor-quality extensions and alterations that were made to support the commercial activities from the site, and to replace them with high quality and sympathetic alterations and extensions to better reveal the significance of the heritage asset and creating a more legible narrative of the building. In returning the building to its original use as a domestic property, the extension and alterations proposed will provide improved amenity to present and future occupiers and ensure that the building is put to its optimum viable use. As advocated in paragraph 196 of the Framework 'less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including securing its optimum viable use.
45. The proposed development can be accommodated upon the site without any adverse impact upon the built heritage it contains; or upon its natural context within the AONB. The proposal is considered to meet the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and relevant policies set out in the NPPF and the HCSP, the Colwall NDP, as well as guidance published by Historic England. The proposal is considered to represent high-quality design and achieve a standard of amenity that accords with the relevant development plan policies and paragraphs 126 and 130 of the NPPF.
46. There are clear economic, environmental, and social benefits associated with the proposed development that are not outweighed by any adverse impact. The proposal represents a sustainable form of development and accords with the adopted development plan when read as a whole. The Framework, as a material consideration, sets out at paragraph 11 that where such circumstances exist the proposal should be approved without delay.