

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 15th JULY 2024

Case No: 23/00500/FUL

Proposal: PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE OF GOLF CLUBHOUSE AND HOTEL TO FORM 14 DWELLINGS, DEMOLITION OF LATER EXTENSIONS TO THE HERITAGE ASSETS, GREENKEEPERS STORE, SHOP AND OFFICE AND THE ERECTION OF 5 DWELLINGS (19 DWELLINGS TOTAL) AND ASSOCIATED WORKS.

Location: ABBOTSLEY GOLF CLUB, DREWELS LANE,
ABBOTSLEY, ST NEOTS, PE19 6XN

Applicant: DAVID ABBOTSLEY LIMITED

Grid Ref: 520781 256664

Date of Registration: 20th March 2023

Parish: ABBOTSLEY

RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE

This application is referred to the Development Management Committee (DMC) in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation as the Officer recommendation of approval is contrary to that of the Parish Council.

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

Site and Surroundings

- 1.1 The application site measures 1.8ha and consists of a cluster of buildings that were formally agricultural but have been more recently used as facilities in association with the golf club including a hotel (now closed). The mix of buildings include the original brick farmstead (used as the golf club house) which is considered to be curtilage listed, with attached and detached later additions, a brick built building (used as the hotel), a large agricultural shed which was used as the green keeper's store and a smithy building which is also considered to be curtilage listed. Eynesbury Hardwicke House to the east is the principal grade II listed building which falls outside of the application site although is under the applicant's ownership. The later additions to the farmstead are not considered to have any heritage or architectural merit.
- 1.2 The site is located in the countryside approximately 2km by road to Abbotsley to the east and approximately 3km by road to

Eynesbury/St Neots to the north west. A public right of way currently traverses the site however the existing green keepers store has been constructed over the line of the right of way as it legally exists. The site is located entirely within flood zone 1.

Proposal

- 1.3 This application seeks planning permission for the proposed change of use of golf clubhouse and hotel to form 14 dwellings, demolition of later extensions to the heritage assets, greenkeepers store, shop and office and the erection of 5 dwellings (19 dwellings total) and associated works.
- 1.4 This scheme consists of the following:
 - Conversion of the hotel building to form 7 dwellings (units 1-7).
 - Partial demolition of the later additions adjoining the historic farmstead (previously used as the golf club house)
 - Conversion of the historic farmstead to form 7 dwellings in total (units 8-14).
 - Demolition of the green keepers store and replacement with 5 dwellings (units 15-19). This includes the conversion of the smithy building to form part of unit 16.
- 1.5 During the determination period of the application, amended plans and documents have been submitted addressing requirements raised by HDC's Urban Design, Lead Local Flood Authority and the Local Highway Authority.
- 1.6 A previous proposal for Proposed change of use of golf clubhouse and hotel to form 14 dwellings, demolition of later extensions to the heritage assets, greenkeepers store, shop and office and the erection of 8 dwellings (22 dwellings total) and associated works under planning application reference 21/00274/FUL was refused under delegated powers for the following reasons:
 1. The amount of proposed development in this remote location is considered unsustainable with regard to access to nearby services and facilities and the reliance on future occupiers of the site to use private vehicles to travel. This proposal would conflict with the most fundamental objectives of the strategy for development in Huntingdonshire set out by Policy LP2 of the Local Plan and the overarching aims of the NPPF 2021 which seek to achieve sustainable development through concentrating significant development in locations which provide, or have the potential to provide, the most comprehensive range of services and facilities which reflect current and future needs. In addition, the proposal does not satisfactorily meet any of the specific opportunities for development in the countryside provided for by other policies of the Local Plan as required by Policy LP10. The proposal is therefore

contrary to Policies LP2, LP10 and LP33 of the Local Plan. The proposal is also contrary to Paragraph 8 parts a & b and Paragraph 80 part c of the NPPF 2021.

2. Insufficiently detailed plans and supporting evidence have been provided with the application to demonstrate that safe physical access to and from the public highway can be achieved. It is therefore considered that the proposal is unacceptable regarding sustainable travel and vehicle movements and conflicts with Policies LP16 parts a & c and LP17 parts b & c of the Local Plan as well as paragraph 105, paragraph 110 parts a & b and paragraph 111 of the NPPF 2021.
3. The application is not supported by a site-specific flood risk assessment or drainage strategy as required by Policy LP5 of the Local Plan which states that sites on 1ha or more will only be supported where a site specific flood risk assessment has been produced. The application therefore fails to adequately consider and mitigate against flood risk contrary to LP5 of the Local Plan (2019) and the Paragraphs 167 and 169 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).
4. Due to the omission of a signed S.106 Agreement and the lack of any clear intention to provide public open space within the site, the proposed development would fail to deliver the required infrastructure and social benefits, specifically, Public Open Space, a contribution to improve local Outdoor Sports facilities, and Waste Management. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policies LP3 and LP4 of the Local Plan, paragraphs 57 & 58 of the NPPF 2021 and the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2011) (costs updated annually).

1.7 This application has been accompanied by the following drawings and documents:

- Proposed plans
- Planning Statement & DAS
- Arboricultural Information
- Preliminary Ecological Assessment
- Surface Water Drainage Strategy

1.8 Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the

planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2023 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'

- 2.2 The NPPF 2023 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
- delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
 - building a strong, competitive economy;
 - achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places;
 - conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment
- 2.3 Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.
- 2.4 For full details visit the government website [National Guidance](#)

3. PLANNING POLICIES

3.1 Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)

- LP1: Amount of Development
- LP2: Strategy for Development
- LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
- LP5: Flood Risk
- LP6: Waste Water Management
- LP9: Small Settlements
- LP11: Design Context
- LP12: Design Implementation
- LP14: Amenity
- LP15: Surface Water
- LP16: Sustainable Travel
- LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
- LP20: Homes for Rural Workers
- LP25: Housing Mix
- LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
- LP33: Rural Buildings
- LP34: Heritage Assets and their Settings

3.2 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

- Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
- Bluntisham Conservation Area Character Statement
- Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)
- Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017)
- Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2017)

- LDF Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply (2020)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)

Local policies are viewable at <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk>

- 3.3 The National Design Guide (2021):
- C1 - Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
 - I1 - Respond to existing local character and identity
 - I2 - Well-designed, high quality and attractive
 - B2 - Appropriate building types and forms
 - M3 - Well-considered parking, servicing and utilities infrastructure for all users
 - N3 - Support rich and varied biodiversity
 - H1 - Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment
 - H2 - Well-related to external amenity and public spaces
 - H3 - Attention to detail: storage, waste, servicing and utilities.

For full details visit the government website

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 The site has a considerable amount of planning and appeal history however most relevant are set out below.
- 4.2 15/01994/FUL approved in August 2016 granted the change of use from Hotel to 4 dwellings. This permission has now lapsed.
- 4.3 17/00470/FUL (18/00007/REFUSL) was allowed on appeal for the sub-division of the existing clubhouse and restaurants to four dwellings and an extension to form a new dwelling. The inspector acknowledged that the site is unsustainably located however the appeal was allowed at a time prior to the adoption of the Local Plan, when the core strategy was considered to be out of date and thus was permitted under the tilted balance. A significant factor for the inspector was the existing use of the buildings to be converted. This permission has now lapsed.
- 4.4 17/00439/FUL (18/00008/REFUSL) related to the demolition of a barn (the green keepers store) and the erection of two dwellings which was dismissed several weeks after the above appeal was allowed on account of the sites unsustainable location and the harm the new buildings would cause to the character of the countryside. Again, the tilted balance was applied but the harm outweighed the benefits.

- 4.5 19/00082/FUL approved in June 2019, permitted the demolition of the barn and replacement with one dwelling. The Officer's justification for approval was compliance with LP33 as the replacement dwelling would be smaller in footprint than the existing barn and enhance its immediate setting.
- 4.6 21/00274/FUL for Proposed change of use of golf clubhouse and hotel to form 14 dwellings, demolition of later extensions to the heritage assets, greenkeepers store, shop and office and the erection of 8 dwellings (22 dwellings total) and associated works was refused under delegated authority 14th April 2022, on the grounds of principle, access, drainage and S106.

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 Abbotsley Parish Council – Recommends refusal.

It was felt that this is a comprehensive and considered planning application with a powerful design and access statement and planning statement. Matters of policy are difficult for the Parish Council to assess. However it does appear that the proposals are contrary to aspects of development plan policies in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 2036 and in particular to policy LP10 development in the countryside.

The Parish Council has broadly accepted the conversion of rural buildings to residential use but does not support the concept or justification for new build housing in the countryside. The proposals would create an isolated residential estate outside the established settlement of Abbotsley and this is considered to be unsustainable and unacceptable. It was agreed that new buildings are not appropriate in this location.

A major concern expressed was that the development of this size and nature would not have a suitable access to the site. The existing concrete track is narrow, not in good condition, and is not wide enough to allow cars to pass except in the occasional passing bay. The development will have in excess of 40 car parking spaces.

Councillors expressed concern on safety grounds that the access road is unlit and partially adjacent to a wood and is used by pedestrians. They would be vulnerable. This demonstrates how remote the location is and the users of the site would need to use private vehicles to travel. This is not a sustainable development, which is a fundamental requirements of planning policies.

It was considered that the new housing would have an adverse impact on the existing Stockmans cCttage and Horsemans Cottages with a degree of overlooking and loss of privacy.

The development does not provide any benefit to the surrounding area or to the local community. It is recognised that there are exceptions to providing affordable housing but concerns were raised that there is no affordable housing proposed. Potentially over 30 children could reside on the site with no recreational facilities planned within the site. The limited facilities of Abbotsley playing field and village hall are some miles away and the development could not be easily supported by village residents.

In summary, although accepting the principles of redeveloping redundant buildings, the development of a residential site with new housing development in the open countryside in a non-sustainable remote location is not considered acceptable.

5.2 Cambridgeshire County Council's Highway Authority – No Objection.

Although the number of staff and visitors would vary according to the time of year and day of the week, the number of vehicle movements is greater than what would be generated by 19 dwellings. The Planning Statement indicates that it is possible that one of the two courses could reopen in the future and there would be an average of 50 2-way trips per day. However, these movements plus the movements created by the dwellings would still be less than the previous use as two golf courses, a hotel and restaurant. Drawing 21/15/01/101 Site Access Plan indicates that the access is 6m wide for 22m with 6m radii which is acceptable. The access road is 3m wide but has both formal and incidental passing places.

Therefore, given that there will no intensification of use, no significant adverse effect upon the Public Highway should result from this proposal should it gain benefit of Planning Permission. Please ensure that our Asset Information Definitive Mapping (Rights of Way) team have been consulted as the access road is a Public Right of Way (Footpath1/5).

5.3 Lead Local Flood Authority - No Objection subject to conditions regarding a surface water drainage scheme and construction drainage.

5.4 HDC Environmental Health Officer – No Objection subject to a condition regarding contamination.

5.5 HDC Tree Officer - No Objection subject to a tree protection compliance condition.

5.6 HDC Urban Design Forum – No Objection subject to conditions regarding materials, architectural details, boundary treatments, hard/soft landscaping, ground levels/finished floor levels and street lighting.

5.7 HDC Conservation Officer – No objection.

The proposed scheme would cause an increase in the amount of development within the setting of the Listed building but this is relatively minor compared to existing modern development associated with the golf course use. Any minor levels of harm would be outweighed by the removal of inappropriate modern extensions and through finding a permanent viable use for the existing buildings as per NPPF paragraph 202. An accompanying Listed building consent should be submitted for the proposed alterations to the curtilage Listed buildings. Otherwise, I have no objections to the principle of change of use to residential as a way to help preserve the significance of, and setting to, the Listed building.

5.8 Cambridgeshire County Council's Historic Environment Team (Archaeology) – No objection subject to a written scheme of investigation condition, due to the archaeological potential of the site.

6. REPRESENTATIONS

6.1 3 neighbouring properties have objected on the following grounds:

- The proposal will generate a significant amount of traffic along a single track lane with passing places that is not lit. This will be an issue for pedestrians and wildlife.
- Concerns over the access, a narrow concrete farm track, and public right of way
- Stockmans Cottage will be overlooked
- Out of character with the rural character of the location, particularly in terms of layout and density
- Overshadowing and loss of privacy
- Noise and disturbance from the proposed development
- Objections made to previously refused application 21/00274/FUL still stand

7. ASSESSMENT

7.1 When determining planning applications, it is necessary to establish what weight should be given to each plan's policies in order to come to a decision. The following legislation, government policy and guidance outline how this should be done.

7.2 As set out within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38(6)) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 70(2)) in dealing with planning applications the Local Planning Authority shall have regard to have provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. This is reiterated within the NPPF (2023). The development plan is defined in Section 38(3)(b) of the

2004 Act as “the development plan documents (taken as a whole) that have been adopted or approved in that area”.

- 7.3 In Huntingdonshire the Development Plan (relevant to this applications) consists of:
- Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036 (2019)
 - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)
- 7.4 The statutory term ‘material considerations’ has been broadly construed to include any consideration relevant in the circumstances which bears on the use or development of the land: *Cala Homes (South) Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor* [2011] EWHC 97 (Admin); [2011] 1 P. & C.R. 22, per Lindblom J. Whilst accepting that the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan, paragraph 2 confirms that it is a material consideration and significant weight is given to this in determining applications.
- 7.5 The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- The Principle of Development
 - Design, Visual Amenity and Impact on character of the area – (Appearance, Layout, Scale and Landscaping)
 - Affordable Housing
 - Residential Amenity
 - Highway Safety
 - Flood Risk and Surface Water
 - Biodiversity
 - Impact on Trees
 - Other matters

The Principle of Development

- 7.6 The site is located within the open countryside.
- 7.7 The starting point for assessing the principle of any development in the countryside is Policy LP10 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.
- 7.8 Policy LP10 of the Local Plan states that *development in the countryside will be restricted to the limited and specific opportunities as provided for in other policies of this plan and that all development in the countryside must:*
- a. seek to use land of lower agricultural value in preference to land of higher agricultural value:*
 - i. avoiding the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 to 3a) where possible, and*
 - ii. avoiding Grade 1 agricultural land unless there are exceptional circumstances where the benefits of the proposal significantly outweigh the loss of land;*

- b. recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside;*
- and*
- c. not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.*

- 7.9 With regard to criteria (a) of Policy LP10, the site is previously developed land (also known as brownfield land) and would therefore, not result in the loss of any of the districts best and most versatile agricultural land.
- 7.10 With regard to Criteria (b) and (c), the proposal is considered to be compliant. These will be addressed in the design section of this report below.
- 7.11 In addition to complying with Policy LP10, development in the countryside is restricted to the limited and specific opportunities as provided for in other policies of the Local Plan, including Policy LP33 'Rural Buildings' which is most relevant in this instance.
- 7.12 Policy LP33 is considered to be most relevant because the scheme consists of the conversion of the hotel building to form 7 dwellings (units 1-7), the conversion of the historic farmstead to form 7 dwellings in total (units 8-14) and the demolition of the green keepers store and replacement with 5 dwellings (units 15-19). This includes the conversion and inclusion of the smithy building, to form part of unit 16, which will be discussed separately below.
- 7.13 Policy LP33 of the Local Plan states *that a proposal for the conversion of a building in the countryside that would not be dealt with through 'Prior Approval/ Notification' will be supported where it can be demonstrated that:*
- a. the building is:*
 - i. redundant or disused;*
 - ii. of permanent and substantial construction;*
 - iii. not in such a state of dereliction or disrepair that significant reconstruction would be required; and*
 - iv. structurally capable of being converted for the proposed use;*
 - and*
 - b. the proposal:*
 - i. would lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting; and*
 - ii. any extension or alteration would not adversely affect the form, scale, massing or proportion of the building.*

A proposal for the replacement of a building in the countryside will be supported where criteria a, i to iii above are fulfilled and the proposal would lead to a clear and substantial enhancement of the immediate setting. A modest increase in floorspace will be supported.

The position of the replacement buildings within the site should be considered comprehensively so that it is located where it would have the least possible adverse impact on the immediate surroundings, the wider landscape and the amenity of the users of existing buildings nearby’.

- 7.14 As outlined above, the proposal is a mixture of the conversions of existing buildings to dwellings, as well as the replacement of an existing building, with the f new dwellings.
- 7.15 Regardless of whether the proposal is for a conversion of an existing building or the replacement of an existing building, it should be demonstrated that the buildings comply with Policy LP33 a.i) – a.iii). For conversion a.iv) should also be complied with.
- 7.16 With regard to part a.i) of Policy LP33, it is acknowledged as it has been in the determination of previous applications and appeals, that the golf club is closed and this has been since the course was allegedly vandalised in 2017 and as such the associated buildings and facilities are disused. Officers also note that to the west of the site, a new golf club house was approved and implemented under 18/00736/FUL which also has parking adjacent to it. This means that if the golf course were ever to be reopened in the future, there is a replacement golf club and associated parking for users. For these reasons, it is considered that the buildings are redundant or disused in accordance with part a.i) of Policy LP33.
- 7.17 With regard to parts a.ii) and a.iii), Officers have attended the site to visit the buildings and can confirm all the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction, and also not in a state of dereliction or disrepair that significant reconstruction would be required. In regard to part a.iv), Officers can also confirm that both the old hotel building and the historic building are structurally capable of being converted for the proposed use.
- 7.18 Given that parts parts a.i), a.ii) a.iii) and a.iv) are met, the existing hotel building and historic farmstead qualify for conversion and the greenkeepers store qualifies in principle for replacement under Policy LP33.
- 7.19 Officers therefore need to assess whether the proposal, especially in relation to the replacement of the greenkeepers store, would lead to a clear and substantial enhancement of the immediate setting. LP33 also requires ‘The position of the replacement buildings within the site should be considered comprehensively so that it is located where it would have the least possible adverse impact on the immediate surroundings, the wider landscape and the amenity of the users of existing buildings nearby’.
- 7.20 For the reasons set out in the below design section, Officers consider that the proposed development would lead to a clear and

substantial enhancement of the immediate setting in accordance with policies LP10 and LP33.

- 7.21 The previous application 21/00274/FUL for 22 dwellings was refused on the principle of development as the amount of proposed development in this remote location is considered unsustainable with regard to access to nearby services and facilities and the reliance on future occupiers of the site to use private vehicles to travel. The key difference between the two applications is the quantum and form of development. This application has removed the 3 additional dwellings that did not have a policy justification (Policy LP33) given the countryside location. As outlined above, there is clear support from Policy LP33 for the conversion of the existing hotel building and historic farmyard buildings to create 14 dwellings and the replacement of the greenkeepers store with the erection of 5 dwellings (19 in total). Refusal reason 1 of 21/00274/FUL has therefore been addressed.
- 7.22 The principle of development is therefore considered to be acceptable, subject to the material considerations discussed below.

Design, Visual Amenity and Impact on character of the area

- 7.23 Policy LP11 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context. Policy LP12 states that new development will be expected to be well designed and that a proposal will be supported where it can be demonstrated that it contributes positively to the area's character and identity and successfully integrates with adjoining buildings and landscape.
- 7.24 Section 12 of the NPPF (2023) seeks to achieve well designed places, noting that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.
- 7.25 The National Design Guide (2020) sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. It covers the following: context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources and lifespan. Of particular note to the current proposals is guidance relating to design and how this understands and relates well to the site within its local and wider context, how the history of the place has evolved and that local sense of place and identity are shaped by local history, culture and heritage, how a proposal responds to existing local character and identity, whether proposals are well designed, high quality and attractive and whether they are of an appropriate building type and form.

- 7.26 The Huntingdonshire Design Guide 2017 sets out design principles based on recognised best practice and explains key requirements that the Council will take into consideration when assessing planning proposals. The Design Guide promotes locally distinctive design which respects and enhances the character of Huntingdonshire.
- 7.12 The buildings relevant to this application are within the setting of the Grade II Listed Hardwick Farmhouse and consists of a collection of former agricultural buildings and bespoke structures providing accommodation and uses supporting the function of a golf club that is no longer in use.
- 7.13 It is noted that the previous application 21/00274/FUL was not refused on design grounds.
- 7.14 There is currently a large amount of hard surfacing, such as concrete and gravel, which surrounds the existing buildings on site.
- 7.15 The proposed conversion of the existing hotel building has been carefully designed with legible entrances to all units. The scheme incorporates soft landscaping and tree planting to provide private thresholds to the proposed units, but to also help break up and integrate the associated existing parking area for units 1-5 into the surrounding rural area.
- 7.16 The partial demolition of the later additions and the proposed conversion of the existing farmstead buildings is also supported. The general layout and proposed openings have been designed to provide a high quality conversion. The parking for units 8-14 has also been distributed in a manner which avoids the clustering of car parking.
- 7.17 The existing greenkeepers store has a footprint (floorspace) of 716sqm and is a considerably large dominant building on the site. The proposal seeks to replace this building with 5 dwellings with a total floorspace of approximately 711sqm.
- 7.18 The scale and massing of the 5 dwellings has been designed to ensure they are of an appropriate size and scale for their countryside setting. Plot 15 is of a single storey scale. Plot 16 is 1.5 storey in height and includes a single storey link connecting to the 'Smithy' which is supported. Plot 16 is also accessed from the track/public right of way, and therefore helps reflect the character of the adjacent Stockmans Cottages. Plot 17 is 1.5 storey in height. Plots 18 and 19 are 2 storey. The proposed materials of brickwork, cladding, slate rooftiles and black window frames/doors are considered to be in keeping with the character of the surrounding area. The overall layout and form of units 15-19 has been well designed to provide a high quality development.

- 7.19 The central area of the site was previously dominated by the car parking surrounding it. The proposal seeks to remove that excessive car parking area and replace it with a green informal play area providing a much softer focal point to the site.
- 7.20 Cycle and refuse storage would be accommodated within communal stores or the rear garden areas of the individual units. The design and appearance of the cycle stores is recommended to be conditioned.
- 7.21 The Urban Design Team support the proposal subject to conditions regarding materials, architectural details, boundary treatments, hard/soft landscaping, ground levels/finished floor levels and street lighting. A condition removing Permitted Development (PD) rights is also recommended given the countryside location and nearby heritage assets.
- 7.22 Taking all of the above into consideration, and subject to the above recommended conditions, Officers are of the view that the proposed development would be of an acceptable design, would lead to a clear and substantial enhancement of the immediate setting and therefore would recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside as well as not having any significant impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others. The proposed development is in accordance with Policies LP10, LP11, LP12 and LP33 of the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD. Subsequently, the principle of development is supported as outlined above.

Impact upon Heritage Assets

- 7.23 The site is situated to the west of Hardwick Farmhouse, a Grade II Listed Building. The southern part of the historic farmstead and the Smithy building are considered to be curtilage Listed.
- 7.24 Section 66 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the Local Planning Authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 7.25 Paras 195 - 204 of the NPPF provide advice on proposals affecting heritage assets and how to consider different levels of harm. Para. 206 states 'Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification'. Local Plan Policy LP34 aligns with the statutory provisions and NPPF advice. It is also noted that Local Plan Policy LP2, which sets out the overarching development strategy for Huntingdonshire through the plan period, includes the

main objectives of conserving and enhancing the historic environment within the district.

- 7.26 Paragraph 205 of the NPPF (2023) sets out 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 (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'. Paragraph 206 states that 'Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.'
- 7.27 The Conservation Team has been consulted as part of the proposal. From a heritage perspective, the Conservation Team have advised that the proposal would be beneficial to the surviving parts of the historic farm complex by removing unsightly modern structures and finding a viable use for the historic farm buildings. The proposed new dwellings are generally acceptable in terms of siting, scale and design and they would not be substantially harmful to the setting of the Listed Building. Most of the previous conversion works to the surviving farmyard buildings have been done under Listed Building consent and they retain most of the architectural elements of historic interest. An accompanying Listed Building consent should be submitted for the proposed alterations to the curtilage Listed Buildings. Otherwise, the Conservation Team have no objections to the principle of change of use to residential, as a way to help preserve the significance of, and setting to, the Listed Building.
- 7.28 Officers therefore consider that any harm caused by the proposal, would be outweighed by the removal of inappropriate modern extensions and through finding a permanent viable use for the existing buildings as per NPPF paragraph 202. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Paragraphs 195-214 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 and Policy LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

Affordable Housing

- 7.29 Policy LP24 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be supported where:
- a. it delivers a target of 40% affordable housing on a site where 11 homes or 1,001m² residential floorspace (gross internal area) or more are proposed;
 - b. it provides approximately 70% of the new affordable housing units as social or affordable rented properties with the balance made up of other affordable tenures;

- c. affordable housing is dispersed across the development in small clusters of dwellings; and
 - d. it ensures that the appearance of affordable housing units is externally indistinguishable from that of open market housing.
- 7.30 Paragraph 65 and footnote 31 of the NPPF 2023 set out that to support the re-use of brownfield land, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, any affordable housing contribution due should be reduced by a proportionate amount equivalent to the existing gross floorspace of the existing buildings.
- 7.31 Paragraph 026 Reference ID: 23b-026-20190315 of the PPG states that where a vacant building is brought back into any lawful use, or is demolished to be replaced by a new building, the developer should be offered a financial credit equivalent to the existing gross floorspace of relevant vacant buildings when the Local Planning Authority calculates any affordable housing contribution which would be sought. Affordable housing contributions may be required for any increase in floorspace.
- 7.32 While Policy LP24 does not reference vacant building credit, the removed affordable housing provision is acceptable taking into account the NPPF and PPG objective to reduce affordable housing contribution when replacing vacant existing buildings to incentivise the re-use of brownfield land. The application overall proposes a reduction in the amount of overall floor space therefore applying the vacant building credit, the scheme overall would not be liable for any affordable housing provision/contributions.

Residential Amenity

- 7.33 Policy LP14 of the Local Plan to 2036 states a proposal will be supported where a high standard of amenity is provided for all users and occupiers of the proposed development and maintained for users and occupiers of neighbouring land and buildings.

Amenity of neighbouring properties

- 7.34 The closest neighbouring residential properties to the west of the site, which are most likely to be impacted upon as a result of the proposed development is Stockmans Cottage. Concerns have been raised by this property in regard to overlooking, loss of privacy and noise/disturbance. The two nearest units to Stockmans Cottage are units 16 and 17. Unit 17 has been designed to have no first floor windows on the rear gable facing towards the south. The proposed first floor windows on the western facing elevation are positioned to ensure any views of Stockmans Cottage would be too oblique to result in a significant overlooking impact. Unit 16 incorporates the 'Smithy' building which is the element located nearest to Stockmans Cottage which will be single storey in height. No first floor windows are proposed

on the western facing elevation. Officers are therefore content that the proposed development would not result in any significant overlooking or loss of privacy impacts for Stockmans Cottage. In terms of noise and disturbance, the proposal is for a residential development, which would be compatible with surrounding existing residential uses.

- 7.35 The other closest neighbouring residential property, which is most likely to be impacted upon as a result of the proposed development is the Eynesbury Hardwicke Manor located to the east of the site. It is not considered that the proposed conversion of the historic farmstead buildings would have a significant impact upon this nearby property.

Amenity for future occupiers

- 7.36 In respect of the amenity for future occupants, all units would have access to external amenity space, would have an acceptable outlook as well as adequate daylight provision.
- 7.37 The proposed development would therefore be considered to be acceptable in terms of the levels of privacy, light and outlook afforded to both existing neighbouring properties and future occupants of the proposed development. Overall, taking the above factors into consideration, the proposal is considered to be acceptable with regard to its impact on residential amenity and therefore accords with Policy LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework, in this regard.

Highway Safety & Parking Provision

- 7.38 Policies LP16 and LP17 of the Local Plan to 2036 seeks to ensure that new development incorporates appropriate space for vehicle movements, facilitates access for emergency vehicles and service vehicles and incorporates adequate parking for vehicles and cycles.
- 7.39 Officers note the concerns raised by residents about the increase of traffic movements and the proposed access arrangements.

Highway Safety

- 7.40 The previous application 21/00274/FUL was refused on the basis that insufficient information had been submitted to demonstrate that safe physical access to and from the public highway can be achieved.
- 7.41 The Highway Authority has been consulted as part of the application and have reviewed the additional information provided with this application. The previous use of the site included hospitality. Although the number of staff and visitors would vary

according to the time of year and day of the week, the number of vehicle movements was greater than what would be generated by the proposed 19 dwellings. The Planning Statement indicates that it is possible that one of the two courses could reopen in the future and there would be an average of 50, 2-way trips per day. However, these movements plus the movements created by the dwellings would still be less than the previous use as two golf courses, a hotel and restaurant. Drawing 21/15/01/101 Site Access Plan indicates that the access is 6m wide for 22m with 6m radii which is acceptable. The access road is 3m wide but has both formal and incidental passing places. The Highway Authority therefore confirms that given that there would be no intensification of use, that no significant adverse effect upon the Public Highway should result from this proposal. As such, the proposal is in accordance with Policy LP17 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036. Refusal reason 2 of 21/00274/FUL has therefore been addressed.

Parking

- 7.42 At least two off-street car parking spaces are to be provided for each dwelling with a number of visitor parking spaces being located in the parking court for units 1-5. The proposed site plan shows a communal cycle store for units 1-5, and stores within the individual rear gardens of the other units. The proposal would therefore help to encourage sustainable modes of transport and would comply with aims of policies LP16 and LP17 of the of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan in regards to car and cycle parking.

Public Right of Way

- 7.43 The access road to the site is a Public Right of Way (Footpath1/5). It is also noted that the public right of way currently traverses the site but the existing green keepers store has been constructed over the line of the right of way as it legally exists. As outlined by the Highway Authority Officers the previous use of the site included hospitality. Although the number of staff and visitors would vary according to the time of year and day of the week, the number of vehicle movements was greater than what would be generated by the proposed 19 dwellings. The Planning Statement indicates that it is possible that one of the two courses could reopen in the future and there would be an average of 50, 2-way trips per day. However, these movements plus the movements created by the dwellings would still be less than the previous use as two golf courses, a hotel and restaurant. Notwithstanding this, Officers are seeking comments from the Cambridgeshire County Council Asset Information Definitive Mapping and will provide an update at the committee meeting.

Flood Risk and Surface Water

- 7.44 National guidance and Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036 seek to steer new developments to areas at lowest risk of flooding and advises this should be done through application of the Sequential Test, and if appropriate the Exceptions Test (as set out in paragraphs 165-175 of the NPPF (2023)).
- 7.45 The site is located in Flood Zone 1, no fluvial flood mitigation is required. The topography of the site and being located on a relatively high natural land level means that the risk of surface water flooding is very low.
- 7.46 The previous application 21/00274/FUL was refused on the basis that insufficient information had been submitted to demonstrate that surface water could be dealt with.
- 7.47 The Lead Local Flood Authority has been consulted as part of the application and has reviewed the submitted surface water drainage strategy and raises no objection to the proposal as surface water from the proposed development can be managed through tanked permeable paving. The Lead Local Flood Authority recommends the inclusion of conditions regarding a surface water drainage scheme and construction drainage.
- 7.48 Overall, the proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable with regard to its impact on both flood risk and surface water, and would not result in flooding on the site or elsewhere. The proposal therefore accords with Policies LP5, LP6 and LP15 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework in this regard. Refusal reason 3 of 21/00274/FUL has therefore been addressed.

Biodiversity

- 7.49 Paragraph 180 of the NPPF (2023) states Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Policy LP30 of the Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated and ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type, and location of development.
- 7.50 This application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by Skilled Ecology dated March 2021. The Wildlife Trust were consulted on the previous application and considered the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal adequately covered all relevant issues and there was no requirement for further surveys, and that the proposed mitigation and enhancement measures should be secured by condition. Informative notes are suggested in respect

of licencing. Officers agree with this assessment and are of the view, that in this case this advice still stands.

- 7.51 As such, subject to the imposition of recommended conditions, the proposal is considered to broadly accord with the objectives of Policy LP30 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework in this regard.

Impact on Trees

- 7.52 Policy LP31 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals to demonstrate that the potential for adverse impacts on trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows has been investigated and that a proposal will only be supported where it seeks to conserve and enhance any existing tree, woodland, hedge or hedgerow of value that would be affected by the proposed development.
- 7.53 This application is accompanied by an arboricultural report and impact statement and method statement (which includes tree protection plans). It is proposed that 7 trees and a large group of leylandii are removed to facilitate the proposals. The trees to be removed include two category B trees and the remaining trees/groups of trees being category C.
- 7.54 The Tree Officer has reviewed the submitted information and has raised no objections from an arboricultural perspective. Given that there are a number of trees that require protection during construction, the Tree Officer recommends conditions to ensure this tree protection is secured.
- 7.55 Accordingly, subject to the imposition of conditions regarding landscaping details, the proposal is considered acceptable in accordance with Policy LP31 of the Local Plan to 2036.

Archaeology

- 7.56 To the adjacent east of the development lies the medieval moated manor of Eynesbury Hardwick (Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record reference. 01116). The moated manor is believed to be related to the manor of Puttocks Hardwick dating to the 14th century. Related architectural fragments have been found in the vicinity which imply the presence of an early high status building, possibly a chapel. The manor house currently extant within the moated enclosure is believed to date to the 16th/17th centuries and has undergone multiple additions up until the 19th century (National Heritage List Entry reference. 1210913). The development lies close to the likely entranceway to the moated enclosure, with deserted medieval settlement remains being known to the adjacent north (CHER ref. 02320). To the west and south of the development and settlement remains, evidence for medieval ridge and furrow cultivation is commonly known from

cropmarks and in some cases surviving earthworks (CHER ref. 06094 and MCB18961). To the west lies the Roman road between the towns of Sandy and Godmanchester (CHER ref. MCB17569). An Iron Age to Roman settlement complex is also known from the west, formed of a complex of seven irregularly shaped enclosures, a ring ditch and pit alignment (CHER ref. MCB19080).

- 7.57 The County Archaeologist has assessed the application and has advised that due to the archaeological potential of the site a further programme of investigation and recording is required in order to provide more information regarding the presence or absence, and condition, of surviving archaeological remains within the development area, and to establish the need for archaeological mitigation of the development as necessary.
- 7.58 It is therefore recommended that a condition requiring a programme of archaeological work, commencing with the evaluation of the application area, which has been secured in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) to be submitted to and approved by the LPA in writing prior to the commencement of the development.
- 7.59 Overall, the proposed development is considered to accord with Policy LP34 of the Local Plan to 2036 and paragraph 194 of the NPPF (2021), subject to the imposition of condition requiring a WSI to be submitted to and approved by the LPA in writing prior to the commencement of the development.

Accessible and adaptable Homes

- 7.60 Policy LP25 of the Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals that include housing to meet the optional Building Regulation requirement M4(2) "Accessible and adaptable dwellings" unless it can be demonstrated that site specific factors make this unachievable. A condition was imposed on the outline planning permission to ensure that the new dwelling (excluding the conversions) would be built in accordance with these standards and that they are maintained for the life of the development. It is recommended that such a condition be imposed again under this application should Members be minded to grant permission.

Water Efficiency

- 7.61 Policy LP12 of the Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals that include housing to comply with the optional building regulation for water efficiency, as set out in Approved Document G. A condition was imposed on the outline planning permission to ensure that the development was built in accordance with these standards and that they are maintained for the life of the development. It is recommended that such a condition be imposed again under this application should Members be minded to grant permission.

Developer Contributions

Open/Green Space/Formal Sports Provision

- 7.62 The previous application 21/00274/FUL was refused on the basis that no S106 agreement has been completed and there was a lack of any clear intention to provide public open space within the site.
- 7.63 The key difference between the two applications is the quantum and form of development. This application has reduced the amount of dwellings down from 22 to 19, including the removal of the 3 additional dwellings that did not have a policy justification (Policy LP33) given the countryside location.
- 7.64 All units have access to external amenity space. Given the proposed quantum of development and given that that the proposed site plan also shows circa 680sqm of informal play area and open space, Officers consider the proposed development would provide an acceptable level of open space as part of the development and therefore an offsite contribution would not be required. The proposal therefore complies with Policies LP3 and LP4 of the Local Plan to 2036. Refusal reason 4 of 21/00274/FUL has therefore been addressed.

Bins

- 7.65 Part H of the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) requires a payment towards refuse bins for new residential development. A Unilateral Undertaking to secure the provision of wheeled bins will be submitted prior to the committee meeting, and Members updated accordingly. On this basis the proposal would provide a satisfactory contribution to meet the tests within the CIL Regulations. The proposal would accord with Policy LP4 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2011).

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 7.66 The development will be CIL liable in accordance with the Council's adopted charging schedule; CIL payments will cover footpaths and access, health, community facilities, libraries and lifelong learning and education.

Other Matters

- 7.67 Neighbouring properties have raised concern about the impact upon wildlife due to the increase in traffic. As outlined above, the Highway Authority has advised there would not be an increase in traffic. Whilst Officers note the concerns raised, it is not considered the potential impacts on wildlife from use of the access road could warrant a refusal of planning permission in this instance.

Conclusion

- 7.68 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.69 A previous application under reference 21/00274/FUL for 22 dwellings was refused on the grounds of principle, access, drainage and S106. The key difference between the two applications is the quantum and form of development. This application has reduced the amount of dwellings proposed down from 22 to 19, including the removal of the 3 additional dwellings that did not have a policy justification (Policy LP33) given the countryside location. Additional information regarding access and drainage has been provided and deemed to be acceptable by consultees. The number of dwellings has been reduced and the proposed site plan shows the provision of informal open space. It is considered that the refusal reasons on 21/00274/FUL have therefore been addressed.
- 7.70 It is considered that any harm caused by the proposal to the heritage assets would be outweighed by the removal of inappropriate modern extensions and through finding a permanent viable use for the existing buildings as per NPPF paragraph 202.
- 7.71 Having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is concluded that the proposal would accord with local and national planning policy. Therefore, it is recommended that planning permission be granted.

8. **RECOMMENDATION - APPROVAL** subject to the following conditions:

- Time
- Approved Plans
- Materials
- architectural details
- boundary treatments
- hard/soft landscaping
- ground levels/finished floor levels
- street lighting
- PD rights removal
- Cycle/bin store
- Tree protection plan compliance
- surface water drainage scheme
- construction drainage
- contamination
- Written scheme of investigation archaeology

- Accessible homes
- Water efficiency

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CONTACT OFFICER:

Enquiries about this report to **Lewis Tomlinson Senior Development Management Officer** – lewis.tomlinson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street
Huntingdon. PE29 3TN
Developmentcontrol@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

01480 388424
www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Head of Planning Services
Pathfinder House
St. Mary's Street
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire PE 29 3TN

Application Number: 23/00500/FUL Case Officer Lewis Tomlinson

Proposal: Proposed change of use of golf clubhouse and hotel to form 14 dwellings, demolition of later extensions to the heritage assets, greenkeepers store, shop and office and the erection of 5 dwellings (19 dwellings total) and associated works.

Location: Abbotsley Golf Club Drewels Lane Abbotsley

Observations of Abbotsley Town/Parish Council.

Please ✓ box as appropriate

Recommend **approval** because(please give relevant planning reasons in space below)

Recommend **refusal** because...(please give relevant planning reasons in space below)

Please see separate sheet.

No observations either in favour or against the proposal

Abbotsley Parish Council Clerk to Abbotsley ~~Town~~/Parish Council. (For GDPR purposes please do not sign)

Date: *12th May 2023*

Failure to return this form within the time indicated will be taken as an indication that the Town or Parish Council do not express any opinion either for or against the application.

Please send response to email address below:-

Development.control@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

(Development Management)

ABBOTSLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council:

clerk@abbotsleyparishcouncil.gov.uk www.abbotsleyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Lewis Tomlinson
Development Control
Huntingdonshire District Council

12th May 2023

Dear Lewis

**23/00500/HHFUL - Proposed change of use of golf clubhouse and hotel to form 14 dwellings, demolition of later extensions to the heritage assets, greenkeepers store, shop and office and the erection of 5 dwellings (19 dwellings total) and associated works
Abbotsley Golf Club, Drewels Lane, Abbotsley**

Abbotsley Parish Council considered this application at their meeting held 11th May 2023. The Parish Council voted to recommend **refusal**, with five Councillors voting and one abstaining.

It was felt that this is a comprehensive and considered planning application with a powerful Design and Access Statement and Planning Statement. Matters of planning policy are difficult for the Parish Council to assess. However, it does appear that the proposals are contrary to aspects of Development Plan Policies in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 2036 and in particular to Policy LP10 Development in the Countryside.

The Parish Council has broadly accepted the conversion of rural buildings to residential use but does not support the concept or justification for new build housing in the countryside. The proposals would create an isolated residential estate outside the established settlement of Abbotsley and this is considered to be unsustainable and unacceptable. It was agreed that new buildings are not appropriate in this location.

A major concern expressed was that the development of this size and nature would not have a suitable access to the site. The existing concrete track is narrow, not in good condition, and is not wide enough to allow cars to pass except in the occasional passing bay. The development will have in excess of 40 car parking spaces.

Councillors expressed concern on safety grounds that the access road is unlit and partially adjacent to a wood and is used by pedestrians. They would be vulnerable. This demonstrates how remote the location is and the users of the site would need to

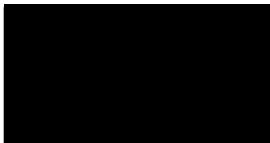
use private vehicles to travel. This is not a sustainable development, which is a fundamental requirement of planning policies.

It was considered that the new housing would have an adverse impact on the existing Stockmans Cottage and Horsemans Cottage with a degree of overlooking and loss of privacy.

The development does not provide any benefit to the surrounding area or to the local community. It is recognised that there are exceptions to providing affordable housing but concerns were raised that there is no affordable housing proposed. Potentially over 30 children could reside on the site with no recreational facilities planned within the site. The limited facilities of Abbotsley playing field and village hall are some miles away and the development could not be easily supported by village residents.

In summary, although accepting the principle of redeveloping redundant buildings, the development of a residential site with new housing development in the open countryside in a non-sustainable remote location is not considered acceptable.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the Clerk to Abbotsley Parish Council.

Clerk to Abbotsley Parish Council

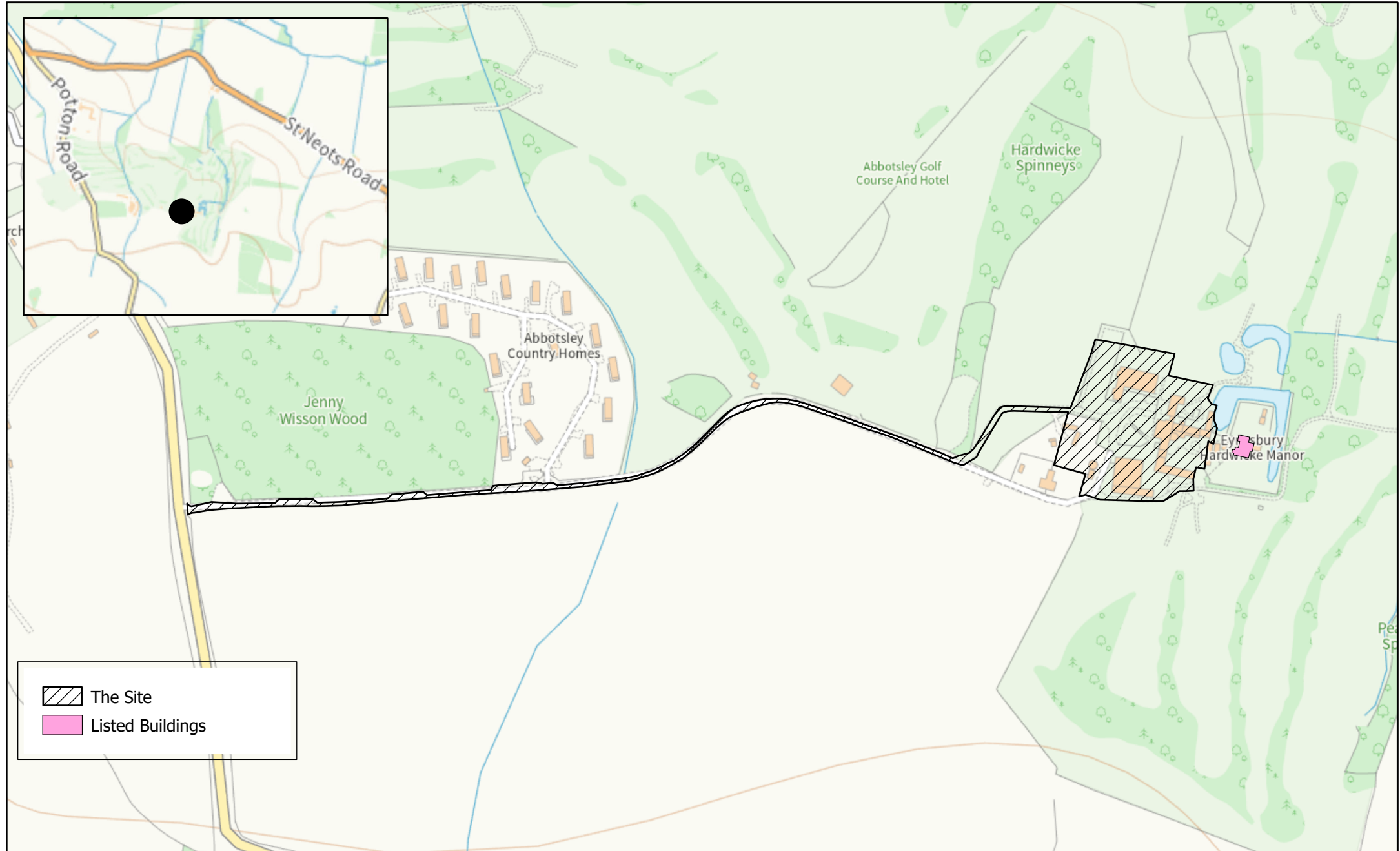
Development Management Committee

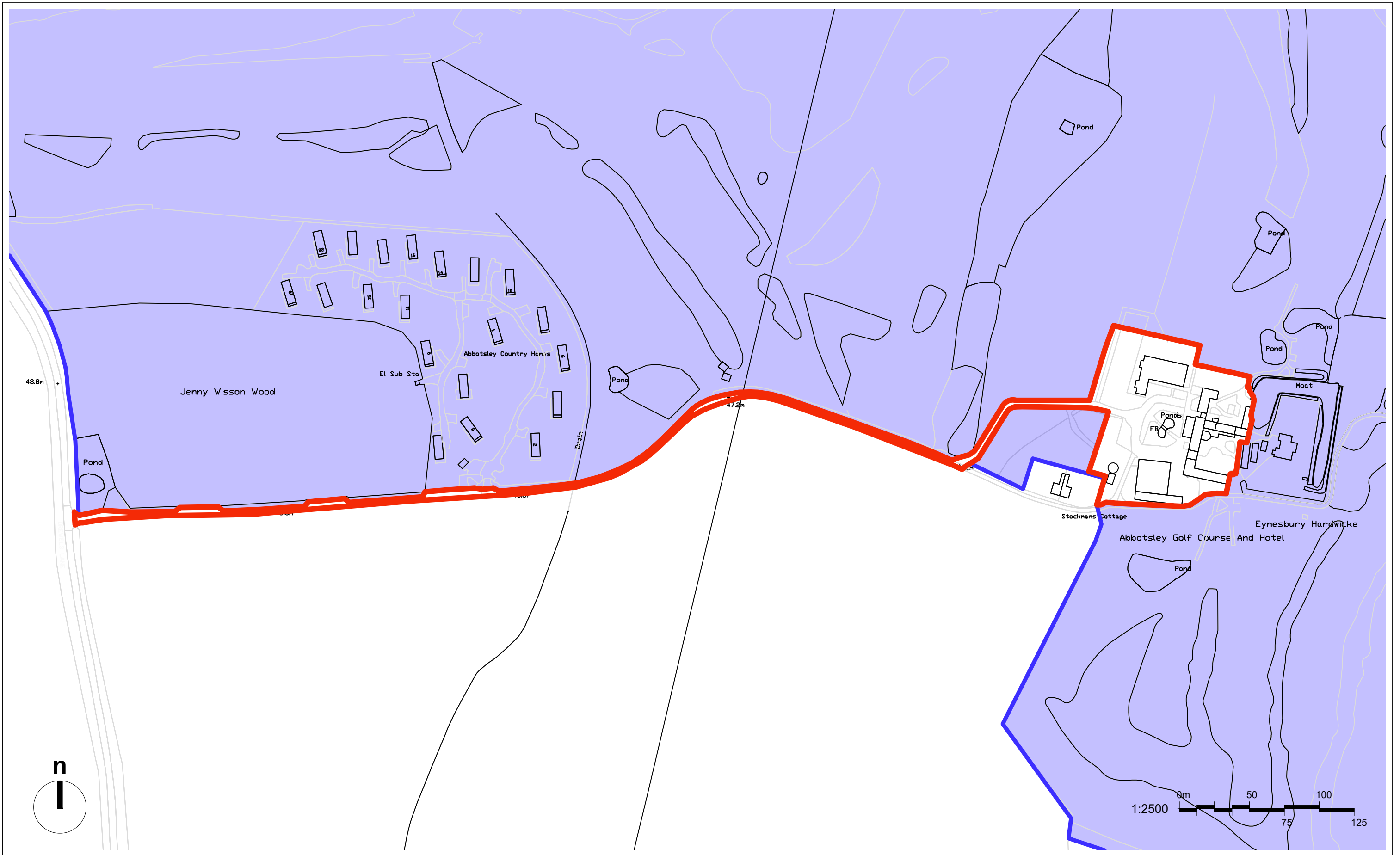
Application Ref: 23/00500/FUL



Scale = 1:4,000

Date Created: 03/07/2024





rev.	date	description	dm	chk'd

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project: Conversion of Abbotsley Golf & Country Club		chk'd: --		rev: PA2		status: Planning	
discipline: ARCHITECTURE		dwg no.: DR-A-0001		project no.: 55699			

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Trumpington Road
 Cambridge CB2 9LD
 t: 01223 841841
 f: 01223 845150
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client: Abbotsley Ltd.
 project: Conversion of Abbotsley Golf Club
 drawing title: PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT - GROUND FLOOR PLAN
 discipline: ARCHITECTURE
 project no: 55699
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 Bidwells LLP
 Tring Road
 Tring, Bedfordshire
 LU8 9JH
 T: 01223 841841
 F: 01223 845100
 bidwells.co.uk