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**Sent by Email Only**

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Date: 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026

Dear Sir or Madam,

**REPRESENTATIONS TO DRAFT STONESFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 16  
CONSULTATION IN RESPECT TO LAND TO THE NORTH OF WOODSTOCK ROAD,  
STONESFIELD, OXFORDSHIRE**

On behalf of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], we have prepared representations to the Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan ('SNP') Regulation 16 consultation in respect to the land north of Woodstock Road, Stonesfield. A site location plan is attached within **Appendix 1**.

In summary, we note the draft SNP fails to make significant provision for new housing to meet the needs of the village and the wider district. This is surprising given West Oxfordshire District Council's ('WODC') housing land supply shortfall and indeed, draft Core Policy 3 of the emerging Local Plan 2042 which defines Stonefield as a Tier 3 Larger Village, and therefore suitable for residential development including a combination of small sites (1-10 units) and medium-scale sites (11-50 units).

It is therefore questionable whether the draft SNP conflicts with the strategic policies within the emerging Local Plan 2043 and the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') 2024, in respect to be being 'positively planned'.

If Local Green Spaces ('LGS') are introduced, then the areas identified would combine to cover an area that encircles the settlement. This would effectively restrict further growth in a manner that is consistent with the nucleated pattern of the village.

In the event LGS's are adopted we consider part of the site could be delivered as LGS, together with the proposed housing, but only if it is delivered as part of a comprehensive development scheme which

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is landscape design led and has been fully discussed with all key stakeholders and residents, including SPC and WODC. We however object to the site being allocated as LGS in its entirety.

### **Supporting Evidence**

Attached to this letter is a landscape technical note prepared by Harman Landscape Architects. This provides a critique of the landscape evidence base for the SNP, namely the Landscape Character Assessment and Local Green Spaces documents. See **Appendix 2**.

It also provides an analysis of the site and its potential for future development, including the identification of current issues and opportunities to further the purposes of the National Landscape (this would be via a suitably designed scheme that would create a more considered edge to the settlement).

For context we attach a letter sent to Stonesfield Parish Council ('SPC') dated 30<sup>th</sup> January 2025 which challenged the allocation of the above site as a Local Green Space ('LGS'). Our site is one of several LGS's that are being considered by SPC following the preparation of an independent Local Landscape Assessment ('LLA'). See **Appendix 3**.

### **About Rectory Homes**

As a privately owned and managed niche developer, Rectory excels at creating high quality developments in desirable locations. It is committed to providing development that brings about positive environmental, social and economic benefits to local communities.

Rectory has a proven track record of working with communities, partners, and people, all in the pursuit of delivering positive change and sustainable value. Further details can be found at <https://www.rectory.co.uk/>

### **Background**

██████████ has a development option over ██████████ and therefore has a vested interest in any future allocation at the site. Working alongside the landowner and key stakeholders, ██████████ is seeking to secure the site's allocation for housing within the emerging Local Plan 2043, as well as within the draft SNP.

Owing to the five-year housing land supply ('5YHLS') shortfall in West Oxfordshire District Council's ('WODC') area, which at the time of writing stands at 4.3 years (see appeal decision at Hailey Road, Witney; appeal reference: APP/D3125/W/23/3328652) ██████████ is also considering an early planning application.

Rectory consider the site offers a sustainable location for new development which can help meet the housing needs of the village and the district taken as a whole. The provision of affordable housing will also address the issue of affordability within the village, as well as the need to provide starter homes and homes for the elderly.

Besides the proposed houses and highways access, the development could provide a pre-school, junior and senior football pitches, parking, public open space, and play areas. We also consider the site offers space to significantly improve biodiversity, both for the site and the wider area.

These community benefits are based on the findings of a residents' questionnaire which was commissioned by SPC to inform the emerging neighbourhood plan.

We consider this proposal would meet the key aims of the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') 2024 and draft NPPF 2025 (the latter is currently under consultation by the Government until 10<sup>th</sup> March 2026). It would also meet the Government's broader aims to boost housing delivery within this current parliament.

Within the draft NPPF 2025, the 2024 'titled balance' is replaced with a permanent presumption in favour of suitably located development. Proposals should therefore be approved unless adverse effects

substantially outweigh benefits. It also introduces a new category for medium-scale development as 10-49 homes on sites up to 2.5 hectares which benefit SME housebuilders such as Rectory Homes.

### **Draft Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan ('SNP')**

Preparation of the draft SNP follows formal designation of the neighbourhood plan area on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021, and we note various workstreams have been undertaken including the aforementioned LLA, a Housing Needs Assessment and a Residents' Survey.

### **The Site**

The site extends to approximately 6.2 ha and lies to the eastern boundary of the village between the recreational sports pitches to the north and Woodstock Road to the south.

It is used for agricultural purposes and has a related access in its southern corner. It gently slopes down from the north towards the south and its boundaries consist of native hedges and trees.

Other than being located within the Cotswolds National Landscape there are very few planning constraints. It is noted in the south-eastern corner there is a risk of surface water flooding. The conservation area and various listed buildings are located some distance from the site.

### **Rectory's Vision for the Site**

The site could be developed for up to 50 dwellings with a layout/design that respects the rural edge character and landscaping setting. New tree planting along the boundaries could also reinforce existing screening and enhance existing biodiversity and ecology.

Vehicular access would be taken directly off Woodstock Road, and which would also provide pedestrian and cycle access to the village centre.

The site is considered to offer the following benefits:

- It is within one single ownership and can be delivered within the early stages of the plan period;
- It can be delivered as a five-year housing land supply site to assist WODC to address its current shortfall which may be less than three years;
- The site can provide a mix of types and sizes of affordable and market housing;
- Provision of new sport and community facilities;
- Provision of Green Infrastructure and biodiversity net gains;
- Creation of landscape enhancements;
- Provision of homes within walking distance of a range of local amenities and services;
- Improves village vitality by increasing the number of customers for local businesses;
- Provision of infrastructure improvements including funds towards public transport;
- Construction of jobs during the build phase, with associated benefits for related suppliers; and
- S106 and CIL contributions.

## Planning Context

We are of course aware of the significant planning history, and the Cala Homes refusal on appeal in 2019. However, it should be emphasised that the site was assessed positively in WODC's 2016 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment ('SHELAA') which acknowledged its potential for around 50 dwellings with provision of significant open space. It was also considered suitable for small-scale employment use potentially as part of a mixed-use development.

The site was also put forward briefly by WODC as a potential housing allocation to the second and third sittings of the Local Plan 2031 Examination in Public (although this was later discounted because – at that time – it was not required to meet an identified housing need).

The Cala Homes appeal decision (ref: APP/D3125/W/18/320955) related to 68 dwellings on a much smaller site - 3.40 ha as opposed to 6.2 ha today. There were two reasons for refusal originally, focused on:

- the impact on the local landscape, density and inadequate provision for landscaping and planting, and;
- the lack of a legal agreement to mitigate (amongst other things) the impact on community infrastructure and the need to provide affordable housing.

In his decision letter, the appeal Inspector concluded that the proposals would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the AONB (now 'National Landscape') and would be contrary to the NPPF, as well as the West Oxfordshire Local Plan ('WOLP'). The Inspector stated the appellant did not provide convincing evidence of a specific local housing need specific to the settlement, so consequently did not consider that the exceptional circumstances test had been met. Additionally, the Inspector afforded moderate to significant weight to the additional benefits provided by the scheme

In finding harm to the character and appearance of the AONB (National Landscape), and the in absence of any convincing exceptional circumstances case being made, the Inspector considered they did not outweigh the highest level of protection that the NPPF provides to conserving the landscape of the AONB (National Landscape). Consequently, it was concluded the location of the proposed development would be contrary to the provisions of the development plan; and moreover, the public interest test as identified in NPPF was also not met.

In light of the site's planning history, Rectory is committed to a working dialogue with SPC, over a sustained period, to agree how these issues may now be overcome. Rectory is 100% committed to deliver a benchmark scheme that is both sustainable and offers high quality development, minimises impact to the National Landscape, and delivers development that the community would be proud of.

Given WODC's 5YHLS shortfall, and the Government's commitment to boost housing land supply, we consider there is some inevitability that the site will now come forward for development. Rectory therefore want to engage with SPC and local stakeholders as early and collaboratively as possible to share their ideas for the site.

## Local Plan 2043: Preferred Spatial Options Consultation

As it stands, the proposed spatial strategy focuses development within and on the rural fringes of Carterton and Witney. It restricts opportunities at Chipping Norton owing to the surrounding Cotswolds National Landscape designation. Development is supported within the service centres and larger villages, and to a lesser extent the medium and smaller villages.

Draft Core Policy 3 aligns growth to the proposed settlement hierarchy, which comprises:

- Tier 1 - the principal towns of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton
- Tier 2 - the service centres of Bampton, Burford, Charlbury, Eynsham, Long Hanborough, Woodstock, Salt Cross Garden Village (new)

- Tier 3 - the large villages of Aston, Brize Norton, Ducklington, Enstone, Freeland, Hailey, Middle Barton, Milton under Wychwood, Minster Lovell (South of Burford Road), North Leigh, Shipton under Wychwood, Standlake, **Stonesfield**, Tackley
- Tier 4 - Medium Villages of Alvescot, Ascott-under-Wychwood, Bladon, Cassington, Chadlington, Churchill, Clanfield, Combe, Curbridge, Filkins and Broughton Piggs, Finstock, Fulbrook, Great Rollright, Kingham, Langford, Leafield, Over Norton, Stanton Harcourt and Sutton, Wootton
- Tier 5 - Small Villages, Hamlets and Open Countryside. These include all other villages and settlements not listed above

Stonesfield is therefore defined as a Tier 3 Larger Village. Within such villages, residential development is anticipated to include a combination of small sites (1-10 units) and medium-scale sites (11-50 units) except where a site is allocated in the Local Plan.

On this basis we are proposing a development of 50-units to accord with draft Core Policy 3 of the emerging Local Plan 2043.

### **WODC's Housing Challenge is Significant - Our Objection**

The scale of this challenge should not be underestimated. Under the 2024 standard method, WODC is required to make provision for 905 dpa, compared to 798 dpa under the existing Local Plan (this figure includes dwellings to help Oxford City meet its unmet housing need).

Whilst we support WODC's commitment to a plan led system, we also understand the Council's five-year housing land supply may be below three years. Therefore, with the continuing absence of an up-to-date local plan, there is a growing vacuum and for many developers operating in the district planning by appeal may be the only realistic option, unpalatable though that may be for the Council.

Added to this are the well-publicised concerns about the Council's reliance on the 2,200 dwellings planned for Salt Cross Garden Village, implementation of which has been delayed for many years.

Given the emerging Local Plan 2043 looks favourably at the expansion of Tier 3 villages like Stonesfield (for developments of 1-10 and 11-50 dwellings) it is questionable whether the draft SNP conflicts with the strategic policies within the emerging Local Plan 2043.

It is also questionable whether the draft SNP meets the requirements of the NPPF 2024, in respect to be being 'positively planned'. This approach ensures plans actively provide for anticipated growth and community needs. This means proactively allocating land and shaping policies to meet development needs and community aspirations, rather than leaving development purely to market forces or ad-hoc application.

### **2025 Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) – Our Objection**

Within the 2025 HELAA the site is referenced STON 002. It has been assessed as 'not suitable or housing' because:

*".. it extends beyond the 20-mph settlement edge and overly large for the settlement, therefore it would be out of character with the settlement and would extend the settlement into open countryside which would have an unacceptable impact on the landscape."*

We strongly object to the assessment of the site within the HELAA. For reasons we have highlighted above this site is considered a sustainable location for growth and could be developed with minimal environmental or technical impacts, or impact to National Landscape. We consider development of up to 50-dwellings would be proportional in terms of the size of this village and in line with draft core policy 3 of the emerging Local Plan 2043.

As set out within the enclosed landscape technical note (**Appendix 2**) the site can be developed sensitively to further the purposes of the National Landscape, as well as to preserve open countryside.

### **Landscape Assessment - Our Objection**

The landscape technical note prepared by Harman Landscape Architects states the site is located within the LLCA C: Stonesfield Inner Fields and Baggs Bottom, and is typical of the area positioned on the northwest side of Woodstock Road, and as such is more strongly associated with the suburban extent of the village at this end, in contrast to the other areas within LLCA C, which lie to the southeast of Woodstock Road.

By virtue of its location, well defined boundaries and strong degree of enclosure (created by the surrounding settlement), it is considered that the site would be capable of accommodating residential development without disrupting the settlement pattern of the village or its setting within the wider landscape. Furthermore, opportunity exists to create a more defined and typical gateway to the village when approaching from the northeast.

We recognise national and local policies seek to protect designated areas such as the National Landscape and there is a presumption against approval of major developments in the National Landscape unless there are exceptional circumstances and where the development is in the public interest. We note these points have been reinforced in both the planning decision and the dismissed appeal, so it is vital we consider the issues raised in respect of previous proposals at an early stage and incorporate the landscape led design approach from the outset.

Whilst the development of the site may represent 'major development' within the National Landscape, we do consider the proposals would address unmet housing need. In addition, the potential delivery of community benefits at the site (e.g. a pre-school, junior and senior football pitch, parking, public open space, and play areas) would be very much in the public interest.

As stated, our development proposals will be landscape led and will be drawn up in full consultation with the Cotswolds National Landscape Board (referencing their Management Plan and guidance notes) as well as WODC and SPC.

We will also ensure the appointed architect and landscape consultant work collaboratively in order to provide a high quality and comprehensive development scheme. A Landscape Visual Impact Assessment ('LVIA') would also be prepared.

To build an exemplar scheme we also consider it important to incorporate the following additional benefits, including:

- Enhanced standards in respect terms of building fabric / sustainable construction;
- Provide a voluntary minimum biodiversity net gain materially exceeding 10%;
- Explore the provision of accommodation for elderly people, including bungalows; and
- Ensure there is sufficient capacity within the local sewer network to minimise pollution within the district's rivers, streams and watercourses,

In our experience, we do not consider it appropriate to overprovide affordable housing because of local concern that it could upset the balance within rural communities. According to the adopted Local Plan, Stonesfield is located within a high value zone where 50% affordable housing is therefore required.

We will endeavour to undertake public consultation in advance of submission of any planning application and to work with all key stakeholders. Given the site's planning history, we are fully aware SPC and residents will be wary of another scheme and are likely to be hostile to development of this site.

## Local Green Space ('LGS') - Our Objection

The concept of Local Green Space ('LGS') is discussed at NPPF 2024 paragraphs 106-108 (this is summarised below). A definition of LGS can however be found within the Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG') under the heading 'Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities, Public Rights of Way and Local Green Space'.

In respect to the LGS definition the PPG states:

*"Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities."*<sup>1</sup>

NPPF 2024 paragraph 106 states:

*"The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period."*

NPPF 2024 paragraph 107 states:

*The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is: a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves; b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.*

NPPF 2024 Paragraph 108 states:

*Policies and decisions for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with national policy for Green Belts set out in chapter 13 of this Framework.*

Whilst we support neighbourhood planning, as well as SPC's vision for the SNP, Rectory wish to object to the site's allocation, in its entirety, for Local Green Space ('LGS'). To designate the whole site as LGS would effectively sterilise the site for development and will only serve to put pressure on other sites within the village to provide new housing.

If several LGSs are introduced in the village, they would serve to limit its long-term vitality and viability, including the ability to address housing affordability (particularly for young families, the lifeblood of any small community) as well as providing suitable accommodation for the elderly wishing to downsize but remain within the village. Effectively therefore, a LGS designation here or elsewhere could potentially have a very significant negative impact on the village.

Furthermore, we believe the National Landscape designation should not be used as barrier to sustainable development; development that is landscape led can be successfully introduced into sensitive surroundings if it is carefully planned. Part of the site could be delivered as LGS, but only as part of a comprehensive development.

Rectory intend that their development proposal comes forward as an allocation within the emerging Local Plan 2043 and the draft SNP. However, where there is an immediate need to provide housing, Rectory may also consider it appropriate to bring forward an early planning application.

Our interim position, however, is that we consider part of the site could be delivered as LGS but only if it is delivered as part of a comprehensive development scheme.

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<sup>1</sup> [Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/81221/open_space_sports_and_recreation_facilities_public_rights_of_way_and_local_green_space.pdf)



## Appendix 1



**NOTES:**  
 DIMENSIONS ARE NOT TO BE SCALED FROM THIS DRAWING  
 ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO BE CHECKED AGAINST ACTUAL SITE  
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**REVISIONS**

| Rev. | Date | Description |
|------|------|-------------|
|      |      |             |

Client :  
 RECTORY  
 HOMES

Job :  
 WOODSTOCK ROAD  
 STONESFIELD

Drawing Title:  
 LOCATION  
 PLAN

Scale:  
 1:1250 @A3

Date: MAR 2026 Drawn By: JL Checked: JL

Drawing No: 1146 100 Revision:

**PRELIMINARY**



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## Appendix 2



# Land off Woodstock Road, Stonesfield

Rectory Homes

Landscape Note

26018-HLA-XX-XX-R-L-9501\_P01

Nicholas Harman CMLI

Harman Landscape Architecture

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# 1 Introduction

## Background and Particulars

- 1.1 The author of this statement is Nicholas Harman, a Landscape Architect with over 20 years' experience in landscape planning and design. Nicholas is a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) and holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Landscape Design (BA Hons) from Leeds Metropolitan University, a Diploma in Landscape Architecture (DipLA) from the University of Gloucestershire and is a panel member for the Gloucestershire Design Review Panel.
- 1.2 HLA undertakes all work in compliance with the Landscape Institute's Code of Practice (December 2021).

## Scope

- 1.3 This statement has been prepared on behalf of Rectory Homes, and considers the Land off Woodstock Road, in respect of the supplied evidence base to the emerging Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.4 The evidence base to the Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan (SNP) considered by this note, are as follows:
  - Appendix B: Stonesfield Parish Landscape Character Assessment (SPLA)
  - Appendix C: Stonesfield Local Green Spaces (SLGS)
- 1.5 This note will first consider these elements that make up the evidence base to the SNP and review the Site in respect of these documents, before considering the Site's capacity to accommodate development.

## 2 Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base

### Introduction

- 2.1 As part of its evidence base, the Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan utilises both a Landscape Character Assessment and a Local Green Spaces document, to help underpin its findings and help structure the Neighbourhood plan process.
- 2.2 Whilst these are separate documents and ultimately have a different focus, the two are not mutually exclusive, given they are both concerned with open space that lies within the confines of the parish council boundary.
- 2.3 The SPLA considers the character of and the potential development pressures on all the undeveloped land within the confines of the Parish boundary, while the SLGS document proposes areas of land to be designated as 'Local Green Spaces' that lie within or physically close to the existing settlement of Stonesfield and which would preclude future development in perpetuity.

### Stonesfield Parish Landscape Assessment

- 2.4 The SPLA identifies a total of five local landscape character areas (LLCA) within Stonesfield Parish. Each defines the areas between the settlement edge and the parish boundary, grouping areas that have similar characteristics and identifying where they differ from the neighbouring LLCA. For each of these areas, it identifies potential 'Threats and Issues' as well as provides guidance on future safeguarding of the character area through measures that Protect, Manage and Plan measures to reinforce its character.
- 2.5 The SPLA identifies that all five character areas would be "highly sensitive to development", with the guidance measures (intended to manage future change of the landscape), only concerned with soft landscape measures to restore the fabric of the landscape. There is little in the way of measures intended to structure future growth of the village.
- 2.6 With the exception of LLCA E, all of the identified LLCA's are influenced to a greater or lesser extent by the settlement of Stonesfield. This influence also varies in terms of the quality of contribution it makes to these LLCAs, and the subsequent extent to which they enhance the setting of the village and their influence on the surrounding landscape.
- 2.7 As with the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment (now Cotswolds National Landscape), landscape character assessments should not be seen as a means to prejudice future development, rather they are to provide a structured basis, whereby future development can be brought forward in a way that protects the key

characteristics of the landscape, as well as provide enhancements to further the purposes of the designation.

- 2.8 In addition to the landscape character assessment, the CNL also produce a Landscape Strategy and Guidelines document, which is intended to help structure future development within the designation to ensure that it will seek to further the purpose of the Cotswolds National Landscape designation with its special qualities protected and enhanced in perpetuity. These guidelines state that:

*“The evolution of the landscape of the Cotswolds AONB is a result of the interaction of both natural forces and the activities of mankind. Landscape is dynamic and continues to change in response to the complex interaction of influences at the global, national, regional and local level. This process of change is inevitable and necessary.”<sup>1</sup>*

### **LLCA C: Stonesfield Inner Fields and Baggs Bottom**

- 2.9 In contrast to the other LLCAs, LLCA C is positioned on the southeast and eastern sides of the village, where the settlement edge is less constrained by topography, resulting in more articulation, with protrusions extending into areas and pockets that are influenced by the surrounding built form. The ‘Threats and Issues’ identified for this LLCA, are as follows:

*“This LLCA is highly sensitive to development which would impact on its rural character; the village edge setting; open views across the landscape towards the settlement, or ‘outward’ views across the remaining pastoral fields south-east of Stonesfield Manor.*

*Sensitivity to development that would introduce tall vertical elements such as pylons or masts. Development within the remaining smaller-scale pastoral fields to the south and south-east of the village will result in the loss of part of Stonesfield’s historic landscape setting.”*

- 2.10 While the other LLCAs are generally well consolidated and consistent in their characterisation, LLCA C would appear to be somewhat contrived and lack a consistent character. On closer analysis, it comprises three distinct parts that do not readily associate with each other.
- 2.11 The first is the area southwest of the Roman Villa, located on the south facing slope of a localised valley. This provides the setting to the Stonesfield Conservation Area and is generally associated with the historic core of the village. It would therefore be more appropriate to align this area surrounding the village with LLCA B: Stockey Bottom and Banks, and Stonesfield Common.

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<sup>1</sup> Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines June 2016 page 1

- 2.12 The second is the elevated plateau that lies to the southeast of Woodstock Road and northeast of the Roman Villa, the elevated plateau on which this area of the LCA is located and its more open aspect away from the village, would align more closely with the LLCA D: Limbeck to Callow Farm Plateau Farmland.
- 2.13 The third is the section of the LLCA that is located on the northwest side of Woodstock Road and extends into areas that exist on the northwest and more modern side of the village, as well as washing across the Woodstock Road Allotments and The Village Playing Field. These elements combine, with the hard urban edge that the village presents to the surrounding landscape, diminishing its quality and rural aspect, when approaching from the northeast.
- 2.14 As a result, it is considered that not all areas within the SPLA would be 'highly sensitive to development' and that through a more robust and methodical approach, such as a landscape sensitivity and capacity study, a number of areas within the LLCAs would be able to demonstrate suitable capacity for development.
- 2.15 The Site on Land off Woodstock Road, is located within the LLCA C: Stonesfield Inner Fields and Baggs Bottom, and is typical of the area positioned on the northwest side of Woodstock Road. As such it is more strongly associated with the suburban extent of the village at this end, in contrast to the other areas within LLCA C, which lie to the southeast of Woodstock Road.
- 2.16 By virtue of its location, well defined boundaries and strong degree of enclosure (created by the surrounding settlement), it is considered that the Site would be capable of accommodating residential development without disrupting the settlement pattern of the village or its setting within the wider landscape. Furthermore opportunity exists to create a more defined and typical gateway to the village when approaching from the northeast.

## Sensitivity

- 2.22 Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (GLVIA3) sets out to consider a Site's potential for development and identify the subsequent effects that may result. Sensitivity is defined in GLVIA3 as *"a term applied to specific receptors, combining judgments of susceptibility of the receptor to a specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor."*<sup>2</sup>
- 2.18 Sensitivity is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a landscape element and the susceptibility of the landscape element to changes that would arise as a result of the proposals.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Glossary, Page 158, GLVIA, 3rd Edition

<sup>3</sup> Page 88-89, GLVIA, 3rd Edition

- 2.19 With the Parish being wholly located within the Cotswolds National Landscape, it is automatically ascribed a high landscape value, however susceptibility is determined irrespective of designation and is established through consideration of context, condition and association. As a result, sensitivity of a landscape to a particular type of development can change throughout an area, even within a National Landscape.
- 2.20 Had a sensitivity and capacity study been carried out as part of the evidence base for the SNP (alongside the SPLA), a more robust and sustainable approach for the selection of the Local Green Spaces could have been put forward that would allow the natural evolution of the landscape to take place, rather than restricting any future growth of the village that could potentially harm its setting and structure in the future.

### **Stonesfield Local Green Spaces (SLGS)**

- 2.21 This document identifies a total of 16 locations within the Parish, to be designated as 'Local Green Spaces', within the the Neighbourhood Plan, as set out within Paragraph 106 of the Framework. This states:

*"The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period." My emphasis.*

- 2.22 These locations have largely been identified through a process that utilises local opinion to give reasoning for their designation. While it does provide a structured approach to identifying how these areas are 'demonstrably special to a local community' (as well as paraphrases sections within the SPLA), there is little in the way of any formal methodology that objectively measures the sensitivity of these individual sites or quantifies the contribution that they make to the setting of the village and how they interact (good or bad) with the surrounding landscape.
- 2.23 It is also worth noting that the areas identified, combine to cover an area that almost entirely encircles the settlement and would restrict further growth in a manner that is consistent with the nucleated pattern of the village.

## 3 Development Potential

### Generally

- 3.1 The Site is located on the northeastern edge of Stonesfield, a large village to the northwest of Oxford. Exhibiting a strong nucleated settlement pattern, the village is located on a plateau adjacent to a localised valley that moves north to south on the western side of the village and which strongly defines its western extent.
- 3.2 Strongly nucleated in its form, the village comprises two distinct areas, the historic core (Stonesfield Conservation Area), which is positioned on its southwest side adjacent to the valley. As a result of the constraint imposed by the valley to the west, the larger and more modern parts of the village have extended northwards and eastwards.
- 3.3 While the historic core of the village is distinctive and locally typical (ratified by the Conservation Area designation), the wider and more modern parts to the village do little to reinforce the historic vernacular and for the most part exhibit hard urban edges (in the form of rear garden boundaries), that diminish and suburbanise the transition with the wider rural landscape to the north and east.
- 3.4 The Site, comprises a single agricultural field in arable use and is rectangular in shape, with a short spur located in its northeast corner. Positioned on a gentle southeast facing slope (between approximately 123m AOD and 115m AOD), the Site is generally flat in appearance and consistent with the flat topography of the village, and the surrounding lowland landscape that stretches out to the north and northeast.
- 3.5 It experiences a strong degree of enclosure by virtue of its boundaries, which are well defined as follows:
- Positioned adjacent to the northeast side of the village the Site's southwest border is defined by the rear garden boundaries of the residential development that typifies the modern and more suburban extent of the village.
  - To the north the boundary is made up of well established vegetation that defines the boundary with The Village Playing Field to the north.
  - To the northeast, the the boundary lies contiguous with the access track to North Farm and which is delineated by a dry stone wall (in a poor state of repair) and a line of maple trees
  - The southwest boundary lies contiguous with Woodstock Road and is delineated by a native boundary hedge with hedgerow tree planting in varying condition.

### Published Landscape Assessments

- 3.6 The landscape within the area has been subject to a number of separate landscape assessments, undertaken at differing scales, these are:

- At the National Level: National Character Assessment by Natural England – 107 Cotswolds
- At a County Level: Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS), as being within Landscape Type 19. Wooded Estatelands and within Local Character Area A. Blenheim Park (CW/29).
- At a Cotswolds National Landscape Level (CNL): Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment Adopted March 2016, as being part of the 11B Stonesfield Lowlands landscape character type and within the 11. Dip-slope Lowland Character Area.

3.7 Given the National designation relating to the CNL and the more detailed information it provides (in respect of new development, the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment should take precedence when considering capacity within the landscape for new development.

3.8 A key feature of the Dip-slope Lowland Character Area is as follows:

*“Settlement pattern of intermittent small nucleated villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads, together with occasional larger settlements, contribute to the strong rural character.”*

3.9 At a local level, the character of the Site is that of a rural field that is influenced by its surrounding suburban environment. This combined with the hard urban edges to its south west boundaries and the definition created by the Woodstock Road and the North Farm Access track, serve to encapsulate it within the fold of the village and separate it from the wider rural landscape to the northeast.

3.10 With regards to sensitivity of the Site, both its value and susceptibility must be considered. Given the CNL designation its value would be High, its susceptibility would be Low, with good capacity to accommodate the type of development being proposed, owing to the scale of enclosure, the nature of surrounding land use and the nature of existing features present within the landscape.

3.11 This would result in the Site only having a medium sensitivity to future residential development.

## Visual Amenity

3.12 Visibility within the area is mixed and varies greatly depending on location of the receptor, relative to the surrounding topography and interplay between built form and vegetation. Generally, views on the flatter parts of the lowlands are open and expansive as you look out towards the north and northeast (away from the village), while views become more enclosed and intimate on the slopes associated with the localised valleys.

3.13 Relative to the Site, its position on gently sloping ground on the north east side of the village, serves to limit its visibility to locations on the flatter lowland landscape to the east. The limited amount of relief between the Site and these receptors, results in intervening vegetation greatly influencing visibility towards the Site, with views generally only possible from along the Woodstock Road where it runs close to or adjacent to the Site; see Appendix A - Viewpoint 1, or from sections along the Oxfordshire Way where it passes between Akeman Street and close to the Roman Villa on the southeast side of the village: see Appendix A - Viewpoint 2. Views towards the Site from the playing fields to the north are also possible but are heavily filtered by the intervening boundary vegetation.

3.14 Where visible, the Site is seen against the backdrop of built form within the village, which lies at a slightly increased elevation to that of the Site, where it presents a hard urban edge to the village at this end and does little to create a strong sense of arrival into the village, in the way that would reinforce the vernacular of its historic core.

## Development Strategies

3.15 In addition to describing and documenting the landscape character of the CNL and its sensitivities, the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines (adopted March 2016), also identifies local forces for change and offers landscape strategies and guidelines to remedy the potential landscape implications.

3.16 It identifies “Development, expansion and infilling of settlements including residential, industrial and leisure” as a local force for change. Relative to the settlement of Stonesfield, potential landscape implications of this force for change, are identified as follows:

- Intrusion of expanded settlement fringes into the landscape.
- Degradation of views to, from and across the Dip-slope Lowland
- Impact or loss of views of key features such as church towers/spires across the landscape.
- Erosion of distinctive settlement patterns due to settlement growth and coalescence.
- Loss/dilution of organic growth patterns of settlements including the relationship between the historic core and adjacent historic fields, paddocks and closes
- Proliferation of suburban building styles, housing estate layout and materials and the introduction of ornamental garden plants and boundary features.

3.17 To manage the change, the Landscape Strategies and Guidelines provided are as follows:

- Maintain the open, sparsely settled character of the Dip-slope Lowland by limiting new development to existing settlements.
- Avoid development that will intrude negatively into the landscape and cannot be successfully mitigated, for example, extensions to settlements on visible hillsides or areas of open landscape
- Ensure new development is proportionate and does not overwhelm the existing settlement
- Ensure that new development does not adversely affect settlement character and form or impact on views of key features such as church towers/spires
- Avoid developments incorporating standardised development layout, suburban style lighting, construction details and materials that cumulatively can lead to the erosion of peaceful landscape character.
- Layout of development should respect local built character and avoid cramming up to boundaries resulting in hard suburban style edge to the settlement.
- Control the proliferation of suburban building styles and materials
- Promote the use of local stone and building styles in the construction of new buildings and extensions to existing dwellings. (New buildings should, at least, respect local vernacular style).

3.18 Were residential development to be brought forward on the Site, careful consideration of these guidelines and strategies should be carefully reviewed and used as the key constraints to developing a development concept for the scheme. It is considered that with a suitable development concept, the elements identified above can be accommodated within any future layout.

3.19 The design should focus on creating a proportionate scale of development that is able to create a considered addition to the village that perpetuates its nucleated settlement pattern, that adjoins with the existing hard urban edge to the southwest. Conversely it should present a positive frontage to the northeast and southeast utilising suitable building materials and styles that reflect the historic vernacular of the village and create a more considered gateway on the approach to it.

3.20 Additionally, volume of development should be carefully controlled, so that suitable space can be provided along its eastern side to accommodate 'Local Green Space' that offers opportunity for landscape and biodiversity enhancements, that would be further complemented by enhancements to the existing boundary hedge along Woodstock Road, which is currently in poor condition, as well as reinforce that existing along the boundary with the village playing field.

## 4 Conclusion

- 4.1 This Landscape Note, assesses the development potential of Land off Woodstock Road, Stonesfield, in light of the Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan's evidence base, specifically the Stonesfield Parish Landscape Character Assessment (SPLA) and the Stonesfield Local Green Spaces (SLGS) documents.
- 4.2 Located within LLCA C: Stonesfield Inner Fields and Baggs Bottom, the SPLA considers that the Site is highly sensitive to development, and as such residential development on the Site would be inappropriate.
- 4.3 Further barriers to development of the Site for housing, are created by the SLGS, which identifies that the whole Site should be allocated as a Local Green Space within the Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.4 While this note is intended to be site specific, following review of the neighbourhood plan evidence base, alongside published character assessments and site survey work, it is considered that further work is required to better understand the village's capacity for future growth, given that both the SPLA and the SLGS take an overly cautious approach to future evolution and change within the village. This could support expansion that is not conducive to the prevailing settlement pattern of the village and the surrounding landscape and which does not address current detractors associated with the village which ultimately diminish its setting and quality of the valued landscape in which it is located.
- 4.5 Had a more finessed study in the form of a sensitivity analysis or capacity study been carried out, it would have identified that the Site has a reduced sensitivity to that stated, and would be capable of accommodating residential development, without disrupting the prevailing settlement pattern of the village and incorporating a meaningful area of Local Green Space.
- 4.6 Through suitable mitigation measures and careful design, potential landscape implications identified by the Cotswolds National Landscape could be addressed, with a focus on creating a proportionate addition to the village with opportunities for landscape enhancements, including Local Green Space provision.
- 4.7 Through a landscape led approach to development, necessary protection and enhancements to the landscape could be incorporated into the proposed scheme, so that the purposes of the CNL designation can be furthered with the proposed scheme in place.



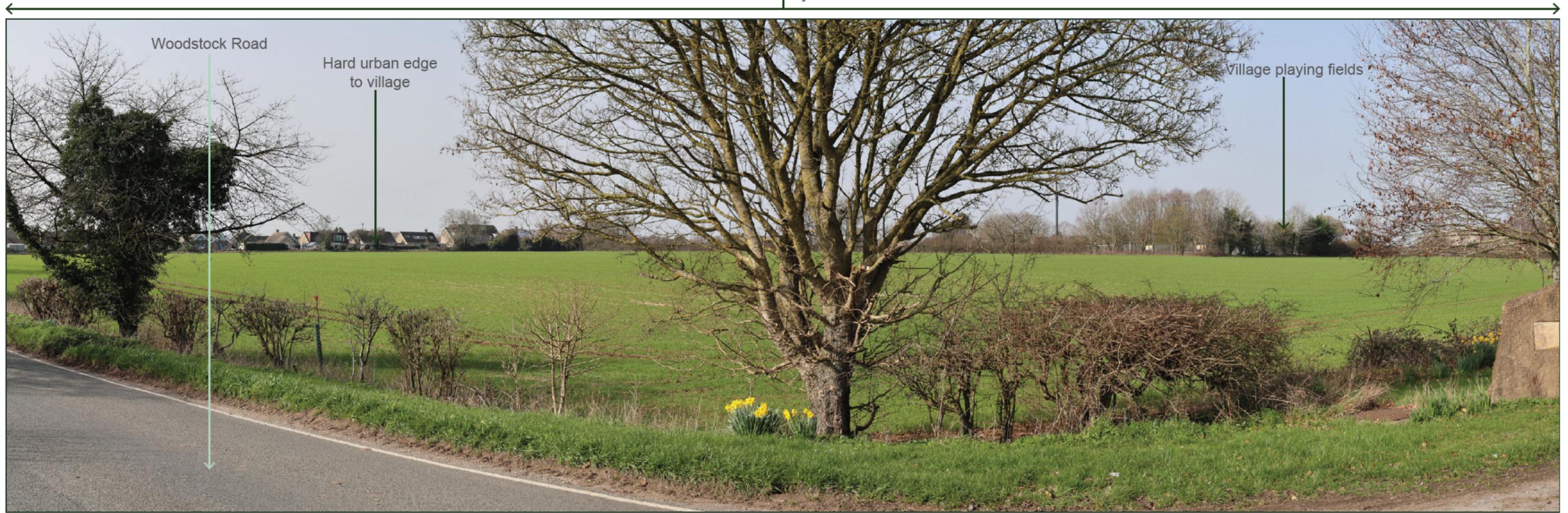
# STONESFIELD

## CONTEXT BASELINE VIEWS APPENDIX A

Prepared by  
Harman Landscape Architecture

on behalf of  
Rectory Homes

March 2026  
26018-HLA-XX-XX-R-L-9502



### CONTEXT BASELINE VIEW 1

Location: Woodstock Road

Co-ordinates: 51°51'15.15"N | 1°25'15.82"W

Direction: West

Height: 119m AOD

Distance: <10m

Date: 5/3/2025

Time: 12:08

Camera: Canon EOS R8, FFS



Maps Data: Google Earth Pro, © 2026 Airbus





VIEWPOINT 1



## CONTEXT BASELINE VIEW 2

Location: Footpath 173/10/10 Oxfordshire Way/Wychwood Way

Co-ordinates: 51°51'10.18"N| 1°24'39.37"W

Direction: West

Height: 124m AOD

Distance: 740m

Date: 5/3/2026

Time: 11:16

Camera: Canon EOS R8, FFS



Maps Data: Google Earth Pro, © 2026 Airbus





## Appendix 3

[REDACTED] Parish Council  
Village Hall  
Field Close  
Stonesfield  
OX29 8HA

DD: 07761 666182  
E: atwamley@arc-planning.co.uk  
Date: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Dear [REDACTED]

**STONESFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN - POSSIBLE DESIGNATION OF LAND TO THE NORTH OF WOODSTOCK ROAD, STONESFIELD FOR A LOCAL GREEN SPACE**

Arc Planning Associates ('Arc') write on behalf of [REDACTED] and Mr [REDACTED], to **OBJECT** to Stonesfield Parish Council's ('SPC') proposal to allocate the above site for a Local Green Space ('LGS') as part of the Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan ('SNP'). This proposal is set out in your letter dated 6<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

We note this is one of several LGS's that are being considered by SPC following the preparation of an independent Local Landscape Assessment ('LLA').

**About Rectory Homes**

As a privately owned and managed niche developer, Rectory excels at creating high quality developments in desirable locations. It is committed to providing development that brings about positive environmental, social and economic benefits to local communities. Rectory has a proven track record of working with communities, partners, and people, all in the pursuit of delivering positive change and sustainable value. Further details can be found at <https://www.rectory.co.uk/>

[www.arc-planning.co.uk](http://www.arc-planning.co.uk)

Arc Planning Associates Ltd, Sandford Gate, Oxford, OX4 6LB

Registered in England: Company No. 13215837 Directors: Nigel Hawkey MRTPI MRICS & Arron Twamley MRTPI

## **Background**

Rectory Homes has a development option over [REDACTED] land and therefore has a vested interest in any future allocation. Working alongside the landowner and key stakeholders, Rectory Homes is seeking to secure the site's allocation for housing within the emerging Local Plan 2041, as well as within the emerging SNP.

Owing to the five-year housing land supply ('5YHLS') shortfall in West Oxfordshire District Council's ('WODC') area, which at the time of writing stands at 4.3 years (see appeal decision at Hailey Road, Witney; appeal reference: APP/D3125/W/23/3328652) Rectory Homes is also considering an early planning application.

Rectory consider the site offers a sustainable location for new development which can help meet the housing needs of the village and the district taken as a whole. The provision of affordable housing will also address the issue of affordability within the village, as well as the need to provide starter homes and homes for the elderly.

Besides the proposed houses and highways access, the development could provide a pre-school, junior and senior football pitch, parking, public open space, and play areas. We also consider the site offers space to significantly improve the sites and wider area's biodiversity.

These community benefits are based on the findings of a residents' questionnaire which was commissioned by SPC to inform the emerging neighbourhood plan.

We consider this proposal would also meet the key aims of the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') which was updated in December 2024, as well as the Government's broader aims to boost housing delivery within this current parliament.

In parallel to the revised NPPF, the Government has also published a revised housing methodology for calculating housing need which is now based on affordability as opposed to population projections. As a consequence, WODC are now required to provide 13% more housing than the current Local Plan 2031 requirement, an overall increase from 798 to 905 dwellings per annum.

## **Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan ('SNP')**

Preparation of the SNP follows formal designation of the neighbour plan area on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021, and we note various workstreams have been undertaken including the aforementioned LLA, a Housing Needs Assessment and a Residents' Survey.

## **The Site**

The site extends to approximately 6.2 ha and lies to the eastern boundary of the village between the recreational sports pitches to the north and Woodstock Road to the south.

It is used for agricultural purposes and has a related access in its southern corner. It gently slopes down from the north towards the south and its boundaries consist of native hedges and trees.

Other than being located within the Cotswolds National Landscape there are very few planning constraints. It is noted in the south-eastern corner there is a risk of surface water flooding. The conservation area and various listed buildings are located some distance from the site.

## **Planning Context**

We are of course aware of the significant planning history, and the Cala Homes refusal on appeal in 2019. However, it should be emphasised that the site was assessed positively in WODC's 2016 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment ('SHELAA') which acknowledged its potential for around 50 dwellings with provision of significant open space. It was also considered suitable for small-scale employment use potentially as part of a mixed-use development.

The site was also put forward briefly by WODC as a potential housing allocation to the second and third sittings of the Local Plan 2031 Examination in Public (although this was later discounted because – at that time – it was not required to meet an identified housing need).

The Cala Homes appeal decision (ref: APP/D3125/W/18/320955) related to 68 dwellings on a much smaller site - 3.40 ha as opposed to 6.2 ha today. There were two reasons for refusal originally, focused on:

- the impact on the local landscape, density and inadequate provision for landscaping and planting, and;
- the lack of a legal agreement to mitigate (amongst other things) the impact on community infrastructure and the need to provide affordable housing.

In his decision letter, the appeal Inspector concluded that the proposals would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the AONB (now National Landscape) and would be contrary to the NPPF, as well as the West Oxfordshire Local Plan ('WOLP'). The Inspector stated the appellants did not provide convincing evidence of a specific local housing need specific to the settlement, so consequently did not consider that the exceptional circumstances test had been met. Additionally, the Inspector afforded moderate to significant weight to the additional benefits provided by the scheme

In finding harm to the character and appearance of the AONB (National Landscape), and the in absence

of any convincing exceptional circumstances case being made, the Inspector considered these did not outweigh the highest level of protection that the NPPF provides to conserving the landscape of the AONB (National Landscape). Consequently, it was concluded the location of the proposed development would be contrary to the provisions of the development plan; and moreover, the public interest test as identified in NPPF was also not met.

In light of the site's planning history, Rectory is committed to a working dialogue with SNP, over a sustained period, to agree how these issues may now be overcome. We are 100% committed to deliver a benchmark scheme that is both sustainable and offers high quality development, minimises impact to the National Landscape, and delivers development that the community would be proud of.

Given WODC's 5YHLS shortfall, and the Government's commitment to boost housing land supply, we consider there is some inevitability that the site will now come forward for development. Rectory therefore want to engage with SPC and local stakeholders as early and collaboratively as possible to share their ideas for the site.

### **Local Green Space ('LGS') – Our Objection**

The concept of Local Green Space ('LGS') is discussed at NPPF paragraphs 106-108 (this is summarised below). A definition of LGS can however be found within the Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG') under the heading 'Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities, Public Rights of Way and Local Green Space'.

In respect to the LGS definition the PPG states:

*"Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities."*<sup>1</sup>

NPPF paragraph 106 states:

*"The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period."*

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<sup>1</sup> [Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space)

NPPF paragraph 107 states:

*The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is: a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves; b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.*

NPPF Paragraph 108 states:

*Policies and decisions for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with national policy for Green Belts set out in chapter 13 of this Framework.*

Whilst we support neighbourhood planning, as well as the SPC's proposals for the SNP Rectory wish to **object** to the site's allocation, in its entirety, for Local Green Space ('LGS'). To designate the whole site as LGS would effectively sterilise the site for development and will only serve to put pressure on other sites within village to provide new housing.

If several LGSs are introduced in the village, they would serve to limit its long-term vitality and viability, including the ability to address housing affordability (particularly for young families, the lifeblood of any small community) as well as providing suitable accommodation for the elderly wishing to downsize but remain within the village. Effectively therefore, a LGS designation here or elsewhere could have a potentially a very significant negative impact on the village.

Furthermore, we believe the National Landscape designation should not be used as barrier to sustainable development; development that is landscape led can be successfully introduced into sensitive surroundings if it is carefully planned. Part of the site could be delivered as LGS, but only as part of a comprehensive development.

Rectory intend that their development proposal comes forward as an allocation within the emerging Local Plan 2041 and the SNP. However, where there is an immediate need to provide housing they may wish to bring forward an early planning application.

Given your letter is dated 6<sup>th</sup> December 2024 and covered the Christmas holidays we would also request further time to fully review your evidence base to justify the LGS allocation; this includes the appointment of a suitably qualified landscape consultant that can verify the findings of the LLA on Rectory's behalf and then discuss the findings with you and your consultant.

We note appendix C of your letter sets out the evidence for designating the LGS on site and this is summarised as follows:

In respect to 'local in character' (item 3) your letter states the following:

*[The site] forms part of the landscape setting on the most heavily trafficked approach to the village i.e. the Woodstock Road, described by the Landscape Assessment (page 18 final para) as “fundamental” i.e. “the landscape setting is fundamental in inward views of the village, and this gives Stonesfield its rural settlement character”.*

In respect to ‘reasonably close proximity to the community it serves’ (item 4) your letter states :

- *The site is contiguous with the built environment*
- *There are no public rights of way over the site, however there are views over the site from the directly adjacent Woodstock Road towards the playing field, and from the playing field over open landscape*

In respect to ‘demonstrably special to the local community’ (item 5) your letter states:

- *Immediately adjoins the village playing fields and by being preserved as open space enhances the beauty, tranquillity and recreational value of the playing field;*
- *Contributes substantially to the “lack of visible development” which the Landscape Assessment says “reinforces rural character on approaching the village from the north-east and adds to the significance of this LLCA as per of a rural ‘buffer’ between Stonefield and World Heritage Site at Blenheim Place” (page 54, para 6);*
- *Contributes substantially to what the Landscape Assessment (page 54, final para) observes to be, for those using the “important recreation route” which is the footpath using the line of the former Roman Road, Akeman Street, “clear views towards Stonesfield across the open farmland” putting the Stonesfield Inner Fields firmly in the settlement’s rural landscape setting;*
- *Is within and is essential to the openness of that setting, which the Landscape Assessment (page 54 final para, page 55 first para) judges to be at risk because “Recent housing development at Charity Farm (William Buckland Way) has created a hard edge to the village in these views, and additional development will further threaten the integrity of its valued rural character”;*
- *Encompasses the site, development of which was rejected so robustly in his Cala Homes planning appeal decision by the planning inspector Stephen Normington, in June 2019 (paragraph 52 Appeal Decision dated 21 June 2019 APP/D3125/W/18/3209551) when he agreed with the current Landscape Assessment stating:-*
  - *From the Akeman Street footpath “current views looking towards the village on this approach are dominated but the incongruity of the Charity Farm development which owing*

*to its urban form and materials, appears as a disjointed protrusion into the rural landscape and displays little integration with the rest of the village” and*

- *“The proposed development would add to this incongruity. The cumulative visual impact of the existing and proposed development when viewed from Oxfordshire Way would fundamentally and unacceptably change the characteristic open character of the dip slope lowland. This change would be visible and perceptibly experienced at close quarters by users of the public right of way on the approach to the village such that in views looking north-west the village would appear as more or a modern ‘suburbanisation’ of a rural settlement within the AONB. This change would adversely affect the enjoyment of the users of the path” and speaking of the Woodstock Road approach to the village, “The appearance and rural character of this part of the AONB would be unacceptably changed and a more suburban character would prevail. This would unacceptably harm the rural setting of Stonesfield within the context of the settled landscape articulated in the various character assessments.”*
  
- *Achieved 78.2% support for designation in the Village Survey*

At this stage, we neither support nor object to the above statements but Rectory request further time to consider their response, in conjunction with their appointed landscape consultant.

Our interim position however is that we consider part of the site could be delivered as LGS but only if it is delivered as part of a comprehensive development scheme.

### **Our Development Strategy**

We recognise national and local policies seek to protect designated areas such as the National Landscape and there is a presumption against approval of major developments in the National Landscape unless there are exceptional circumstances and where the development is in the public interest. We note these points have been reinforced in both the planning decision and the dismissed appeal, so it is vital we consider the issues raised in respect of previous proposals at an early stage and incorporate the landscape led design approach from the outset.

Whilst the development of the site may represent ‘major development’ within the National Landscape, we do consider the proposals would address unmet housing need. In addition, the potential delivery of community benefits at the site (e.g. a pre-school, junior and senior football pitch, parking, public open space, and play areas) would be very much in the public interest.

As stated, our development proposals will be landscape led and will be drawn up in full consultation with the Cotswolds National Landscape Board (referencing their Management Plan and guidance notes) as well as WODC and SPC.

We will also ensure the appointed architect and landscape consultant work collaboratively in order to provide a high quality and comprehensive development scheme. A Landscape Visual Impact Assessment ('LVIA') would also be prepared.

To build an exemplar scheme we also consider it important to incorporate the following additional benefits, including:

- Enhanced standards in respect terms of building fabric / sustainable construction;
- Provide a voluntary minimum biodiversity net gain materially exceeding 10%;
- Explore the provision of accommodation for elderly people, including bungalows; and
- Ensure there is sufficient capacity within the local sewer network to minimise pollution within the district's rivers, streams and watercourses,

In our experience, we do not consider it appropriate to overprovide affordable housing because of local concern that it could upset the balance within rural communities. According to the adopted Local Plan, Stonesfield is located within a high value zone where 50% affordable housing is therefore required.

We will endeavour to undertake public consultation in advance of submission of any planning application and to work with all key stakeholders. Given the site's planning history, we are fully aware SPC and residents will be wary of another scheme and are likely to be hostile to development of this site.

### **Conclusions & Next Steps**

████████████████████████████████████████ objects to the allocation of the site, in its entirety, for LGS. We consider part of the site could be delivered as LGS but only if it is delivered as part of a comprehensive development scheme which is landscape design led and has been fully discussed with all key stakeholders and residents, including SPC and WODC.

In summary, we genuinely want to work with SPC on a collaborative basis, ensuring the site can be developed to the best it can be within this National Landscape setting, and that we can deliver something the community can be proud of.

We would welcome a meeting with you at the earliest opportunity to discuss our ideas for the site and our response to the work of the independent LLA.

If you have any further questions in the meantime though, please do not hesitate to get in contact.

Yours sincerely,

ATWAMLEY

**Arron Twamley MRTPI**  
**Director**  
**Arc Planning Associates**

■ [REDACTED]