

Planning Statement

**Demolition of existing dwelling and
associated outbuilding, erection of
replacement dwelling and outbuilding,
creation of new access and associated
landscaping works**

Youngs Farm, Kentons Lane, Upper Culham,
Reading RG10 8NX

On behalf of:

Ryan Somauroo

October 2026

Ref: 4890

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Smith Jenkins Planning & Heritage on behalf of the applicant, Mr Ryan Somauroo. This Statement forms part of a full planning application at Youngs Farm, Kentons Lane, Upper Culham, Reading RG10 8NX ('the site') for:

'Demolition of existing dwelling and associated outbuilding, erection of replacement dwelling and outbuilding, creation of new access and associated landscaping works'

- 1.2 This Statement considers the proposals against the Development Plan and all other material considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF'), in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 1.3 The remainder of this Statement is set out as follows:
- **Section 2 – Background:** provides a detailed description of the Site and its surroundings and sets out other useful background information to the application including relevant planning history.
 - **Section 3 – Proposals:** provides a detailed description and explanation of the proposed development.
 - **Section 4 – Planning Policy:** sets out the planning policy framework against which the planning application should be assessed.
 - **Section 5 – Planning Assessment:** provides a detailed justification for the development against applicable planning policies and taking account of all other material considerations.
 - **Section 6 – Conclusion:** summarises the key benefits of the proposed development and the reasons why planning permission should be granted.
- 1.4 This Statement should be read in conjunction with the drawings and documents submitted with the planning application. A full list of planning documents is available in the accompanying covering letter.

2 Site Background

- 2.1 The Site, identified in Figure 1 below, is located off Kentons Lane, approximately 2.5km to the east of Henley-on-Thames, in an area characterised by open fields, scattered residential developments and farmsteads, and woodland areas. The Site comprises a large, detached dwelling with principal elevation and driveway to the east, alongside a C-shaped range of outbuildings to the south and a single linear outbuilding to the north.



Figure 1: Site Location Plan and Aerial View of the Site

- 2.2 The Site is located outside of any defined settlement boundary, within the Open Countryside and Metropolitan Green Belt.
- 2.3 There are no statutorily or locally listed buildings within the Site. There is, however, a Grade II* registered park and garden (Park Place and Temple Combe) to the west (**Figure 2**). The Site is not located within a Conservation Area and there are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) present on, or immediately adjacent, to the Site.



Figure 2: Extract taken from Historic England Heritage map

- 2.4 In flood risk terms, the Site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of fluvial flooding) and is at very low risk of surface water flooding.

Planning History

- 2.5 Relevant planning history for the Site is detailed below

Reference:	Proposal:	Decision and date:
172862	Full application for the proposed erection of a replacement dwelling with basement following demolition of existing dwelling.	Approved 08 August 2018
152328	Householder application for the proposed extension to existing stables building in curtilage of dwelling.	Approved 12 November 2015
F/2015/0648	Proposed erection of a stable block with new access. Demolition of existing stable block following completion.	Refused 09 July 2015
CLE/2014/1864	Application for a certificate of existing use for use of land for breeding, grazing and training of polo ponies and for polo matches.	Approved 08 October 2014
F/2014/1313	Proposed demolition of existing dwelling and erection of replacement dwelling.	Approved 19 December 2014
CLE/2014/0237	Application for a certificate of existing use for use of land for breeding, grazing and training of polo ponies and for polo matches.	Refused 17 April 2014
AG/2008/1689	Application for agricultural prior determination for the proposed erection of multi-purpose storage barns.	Refused 22 August 2008

AG/2008/0962	Application for Agricultural Prior Determination for the erection of a storage barn.	Refused 23 May 2008
AG/2007/2946	Application for Agricultural prior determination for the erection of a barn.	Refused 19 December 2007
F/2007/1916	Proposed construction of an irrigation lake.	Approved 24 August 2007
F/2002/7973	Proposed removal of top soil and replacement with sand to form an equestrian track. Retrospective.	Approved 30 July 2003
F/2002/7845	Proposed single storey side extensions to dwelling. Dormer extensions to form rooms in loft space and 2 new chimneys.	Approved 26 November 2002
F/2001/5293	Proposed erection of new entrance piers and gates.	Approved 04 March 2002
F/1996/63781	Change Of Use of Agricultural Use to Residential Use, Proposed Erection of Two Single Storey Buildings to provide stable and garage.	Approved 18 June 1996

Key Planning History

- 2.6 The Site benefits from a planning history which is directly relevant to the assessment of the current proposals. In particular, the Council has previously granted permission for replacement dwellings at Youngs Farm under application references F/2014/1313 and 172862.
- 2.7 Both replacement dwelling schemes were assessed against Green Belt policy as replacement buildings that were “not materially larger” than the original dwelling, with the Council applying Local Plan Policy TB01 and accepting the supporting text guideline of a 35% volume increase and also accepting the exclusion of basement floorspace/volume from the volumetric assessment. The 2018 replacement dwelling (approved under ref. 172862) was repositioned further east and on higher ground, but still within the established curtilage. Officers concluded this would not materially harm openness or the wider character of the Green Belt. Furthermore, in design terms, the scheme moved away from the agricultural/barn style character of the existing house towards a “manorial style with decorative, feature chimneys.” The Council accepted this shift, noting it would still reflect elements of local character and would not detract from the setting.
- 2.8 Finally, in August 2015 the Council approved a householder application for extensions to the existing stable building under reference 152328, confirming the stables as being within the residential curtilage/planning unit associated with the main dwelling.

Pre-Application Advice

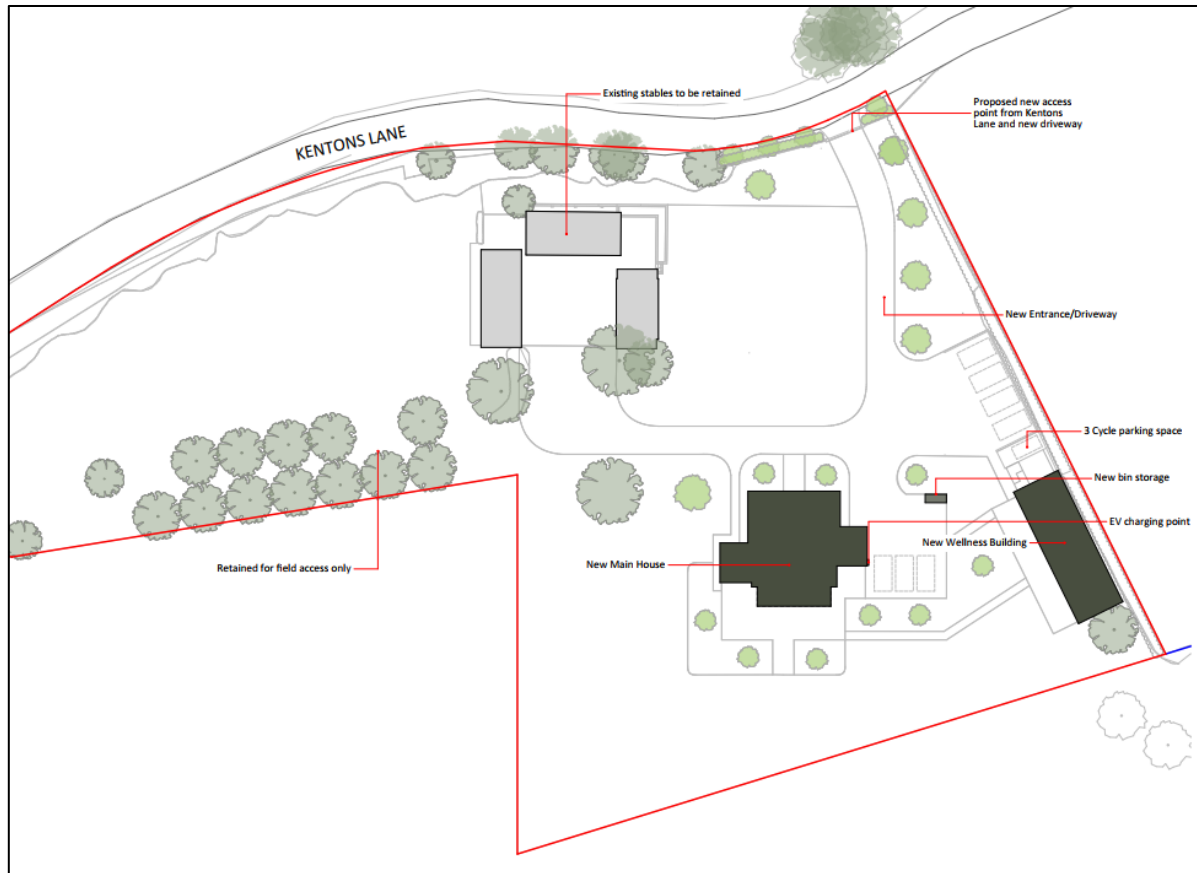
- 2.9 The applicant made a pre-application enquiry for the proposed development (reference: PRE/2025/0089). The main matters raised within the pre-application response provided by the Council were:
- The impact on the openness of the Green Belt
 - Size and massing of the replacement dwelling

- Impact of the dwelling on the character of the area and landscape
- Design of the dwelling

2.10 The proposal has sought to address matters raised in the pre-application advice provided by the Council by evolving the design in the style of a farmhouse suited to the rural setting and reviewing the size to ensure the replacement buildings would not be materially larger than existing. The proposal is detailed below. The application is also supported by a full suite of technical assessments identified as required in the pre-application response, including an assessment considering the landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development.

3 Proposed Development

- 3.1 The proposed development involves the demolition of the existing dwelling and erection of a replacement dwelling, replacement outbuilding, and other works comprising the creation of a new access, driveway and landscaping, as illustrated in **Figure 3** below. Full details and visuals of the proposals are provided within the accompanying Design and Access Statement and drawing set.



- 3.2 The proposal seeks the demolition of the existing dwelling and its replacement with a new five-bedroom dwelling, together with the removal and the demolition and replacement of the existing northern outbuilding, along with the creation of a new access and associated landscaping works. The proposal has been designed as a comprehensive redevelopment of the existing residential property to establish a more appropriate relationship between the dwelling, its ancillary buildings, the Kentons Lane frontage and the wider surrounding rural landscape.
- 3.3 The proposed replacement dwelling would be positioned further back within the site than the existing dwelling and would be reoriented so that its principal elevation faces west towards Kentons Lane and the proposed new driveway and arrival area.
- 3.4 The dwelling would comprise a principal front range and a secondary rear range, together with lower single-storey side extensions and a contemporary rear extension. The resulting form is deliberately articulated, with a series of connected and varied volumes rather than a single uniform block. This approach draws on the character of traditional farmhouses that have evolved incrementally over time and responds to the rural character of Youngs Farm and the surrounding area.

- 3.5 The proposed dwelling has been reduced in scale and massing following the Council's pre-application advice. The overall height has been lowered, with floor-to-ceiling heights reduced to approximately 2.5m–2.6m, and the building's articulated roof form seeks to minimise its bulk and visual prominence. The previously proposed formal classical features, including columns and cornices, have been removed in favour of a simpler farmhouse-style architectural language. The proposed material palette would draw upon the local vernacular and nearby properties, including brick and timber cladding, to ensure that the dwelling responds appropriately to its rural setting.
- 3.6 The existing dwelling comprises a volume of 1055.67m³, the proposal will lead to an increase in volume of 34% with a volume of 1417m³.
- 3.7 Internally, the five-bedroom dwelling would provide a comprehensive family home with a clear distinction between shared living accommodation and more private spaces. The orientation of the house allows the principal living spaces to open towards the south and east, providing direct access to the main garden and taking advantage of the site's outlook towards the surrounding countryside. The western-facing accommodation and principal entrance would provide an appropriate relationship with the new arrival area and Kentons Lane.
- 3.8 The proposal also includes the construction of a new ancillary 'wellness' building on the northern boundary of the site as a replacement of an existing outbuilding. This building would provide ancillary leisure and amenity accommodation associated with the main dwelling to include a pool, gym and sauna and would remain clearly subordinate to the principal house. The replacement wellness building would retain the same overall volume as the existing northern outbuilding, at approximately 450m³, resulting in no increase in volume over the building it replaces. Its position, scale and simple form are intended to ensure that it remains a secondary element within the wider site.
- 3.9 Finally, the scheme proposes a new vehicular access to be formed from Kentons Lane towards the north-western part of the site. This would provide the principal access to the replacement dwelling and would connect to a new driveway and parking area serving the dwelling. The existing access would be retained for field access purposes only.
- 3.10 The siting and arrangement of the new access and driveway have been considered alongside the positioning of the replacement dwelling to provide an appropriate arrival sequence while minimising the visual prominence of the development from Kentons Lane.
- 3.11 The proposal includes associated parking and servicing arrangements, including cycle parking, bin storage and electric vehicle charging provision. The driveway and associated hardstanding would be integrated with the proposed landscape strategy, with the extent of hardstanding controlled to maintain the predominantly landscaped and rural character of the site.
- 3.12 New planting and landscaping would be introduced throughout the site to assist in integrating the replacement dwelling and ancillary building into their surroundings. Existing mature trees and boundary planting would be retained wherever possible, with additional trees and hedging proposed. The landscape strategy would also assist in defining the residential curtilage and maintaining a clear distinction between the developed part of the site and the adjoining countryside.
- 3.13 The proposed development therefore represents a comprehensive redevelopment of Youngs Farm, comprising the replacement of the existing dwelling with a five-bedroom farmhouse-style dwelling, removal and replacement of the northern outbuilding with an ancillary wellness building, creation of a new principal vehicular access and driveway, and associated parking, servicing, planting and

landscaping works. Collectively, these elements seek to create a more coherent and appropriately scaled group of buildings which responds to the established rural character of the site while improving the relationship between the built development and its landscape setting.

4 Planning Policy

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that ‘where in making any determination under the planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicates otherwise.’
- 4.2 The Development Plan comprises of the Wokingham Core Strategy, adopted in January 2010, and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan, adopted February 2014. There is no Neighbourhood Plan covering the Site.
- 4.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2026), Planning Practice Guidance (2024) and Supplementary Planning Documents are also material considerations.

Emerging Local Plan

- 4.4 The Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023–2040 was formally submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on 28 February 2025, hearing sessions took place in November 2025 and March-June 2026, after which the Inspectors issued their post-hearings letter in August 2026 advising that the Plan is likely to be capable of being found sound and legally compliant subject to main modifications. The Council are in the process of preparing the necessary modifications and further evidence for consultation. Formal adoption of the Updated Local Plan is expected to follow in 2027. In line with NPPF guidance, the emerging plan now carries increasing weight as it progresses through examination.

Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (January 2010)

- 4.5 The key policies from the Core Strategy are:
- CP1 – Sustainable Development
 - CP3 – General Principles for Development
 - CP6 – Managing Travel Demand
 - CP7 – Biodiversity
 - CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
 - CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits (including countryside)
 - CP12 – Green Belt

Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Local Plan

- 4.6 The key policies from the Local Plan are:
- CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 - CC02 – Development Limits
 - CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping

- CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC07 – Parking
- CC10 – Sustainable Drainage
- TB01 – Development in the Green Belt
- TB07 – Internal Space Standards
- TB21 – Landscape Character
- TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
- TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets

Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (Submission Plan)

4.7 The key policies from the Emerging Local Plan are:

- SS2 - Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy
- SS5 – Development in the Countryside
- SS6 – Development in the Green Belt
- H8 – Conversion and sub-division of buildings
- NE4 – Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands
- NE5 – Landscape and Design
- NE6 – Valued Landscapes
- DH1 – Place-making and Design Quality
- DH5 – The Historic Environment

National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026)

4.8 The relevant sections and paragraphs of the NPPF are:

- Meeting the challenge of climate change
- Sustainable Development
- Protecting Green Belt land (Policy GB7)
- Achieving well-designed places
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Documents

4.9 The SPD's that are relevant in the determination of the proposal include:

- Sustainable Design and Construction (May 2010)
- Borough Design Guide (June 2012)

5 Planning Assessment

5.1 The following key issues have been identified and are discussed in detail below to respond to the pre-application advice and provide a planning assessment against national and local planning policy.

- Principle of development
- Design
- Landscape and Character
- Highway Access and Parking Provision
- Arboriculture, Ecology and BNG
- Sustainability
- Flooding and Drainage
- Heritage
- Amenity

Principle of Development

5.2 The Site lies outside any defined settlement boundary and is entirely washed over by the Green Belt. Therefore, there is a presumption against inappropriate development, unless development falls within one of the exceptions which the NPPF confirms are not inappropriate, including the replacement of existing buildings with new ones in the same use and not materially larger than those being replaced.

5.3 Core Strategy Policy CP12 sets out the presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt and confirms that proposals which harm openness will not be acceptable. Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Policy TB01 similarly confirms that development within the Green Belt will only be permitted where it maintains openness and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it and further defines a “limited” addition as one that is cumulatively 35% or less in volume compared to the original building, and as such could be viewed as not “disproportionate” in size.

5.4 Core Strategy policy CP11 is also relevant which states that development will not normally be permitted unless it meets certain exception criteria. In the case of a replacement dwelling, a proposal must bring about environmental improvements or not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.

5.5 Core Strategy Policy CP12 and MDD Policy TB01 state that development in the Green Belt will only be permitted where it maintains openness and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. TB01 goes on to state that the alteration and/or extension of a dwelling, and the construction, alteration or extension of buildings ancillary to a dwelling in the Green Belt, over and above the size of the original building(s), shall be limited in scale.

5.6 As noted above and within the Officer’s pre-application advice, the Council consider an increase of up to 35% in volume to be proportionate. As set out within the accompanying Design and Access

Statement the existing gross external volume of 1055.67m³ has been adopted as the agreed baseline for the original dwelling. The submitted scheme proposes a volume of 1,417m³ which is a net volume increase of 34% which complies with the limits within Policy TB01 being considered a “limited” increase in volume and therefore the proposal would not result in a materially larger building than the one it replaces.

- 5.7 With regard to openness within the Green Belt the pre-application response noted that shifting of built form to the east coupled with the increased height (approximately 2m taller) and massing, would create a more prominent building and exacerbate the impact of the scheme on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 5.8 The proposal has responded by reducing the ceiling heights from 2.9m to 2.5/2.6m. As a result of this the ridge height has been reduced to approximately 9.5m (compared to 10.25m at pre-app stage) which has also reduced the building’s overall vertical emphasis. As stated within the Design and Access Statement this lower form responds to the informal clusters of development that characterise the surrounding area and re-establishes a modest building that sits comfortably within its rural setting. The scheme now proposes a simpler farmhouse architectural language that is appropriate to its rural context and would not result in a detrimental impact on the sense of openness when viewed from public vantage points to the west and north-east. The proposed design has been redesigned to relate with the recently erected replacement dwelling of Upper Culham House.
- 5.9 Additionally, it is proposed to demolish the existing outbuilding and replace it with a new ancillary ‘wellness’ building. The outbuilding lies within the curtilage of the dwelling and is used for ancillary purposes connected with the main house. The proposed replacement building would continue that ancillary residential role, providing leisure and amenity space for the occupiers of the dwelling. The replacement structure would therefore remain in the same use as existing, in line with the requirements of NPPF Policy GB7(1)(b).
- 5.10 As can be seen from the proposed drawings and discussed in the accompanying Design and Access Statement, the replacement outbuilding would be of similar scale and form and comprise the same volume as the existing outbuilding. This approach has been developed to ensure the replacement does not exceed the “not materially larger” threshold, both on a like-for-like basis and when considered cumulatively as part of the overall package of development. Furthermore, the new outbuilding would be positioned slightly further east than existing, responding to the revised site arrangement and the eastward shift of the replacement dwelling.
- 5.11 The proposed dwelling and replacement outbuilding are considered to comply with policies CP12 and TB01 and the relevant NPPF Green Belt provisions

Design

- 5.12 Core Strategy Policy CP3 requires development to achieve a high standard of design, respond positively to its context, and create places that are attractive and function well. MDD Policy TB21 requires development to retain and, where possible, enhance landscape character, having regard to the Council’s Landscape Character Assessment.
- 5.13 The design of the proposed replacement dwelling has been developed to provide a high-quality new dwelling that responds to local rural character and establishes a clear hierarchy of frontage and arrival. The dwelling would be re-orientated so that the principal elevation faces west toward Kentons Lane, which strengthens legibility and results in a more logical relationship between the dwelling,

access/drive and the wider layout. The dwelling would also be repositioned slightly further to the east but still within the established curtilage. The design has taken its lead from the local farmhouse character of Upper Culham House and replaces the single formal block with a fragmented plan of lower, asymmetric ranges breaking down the massing and resulting in the building appearing to be the informal, evolved character of a working farmhouse. Design precedents are detailed in the accompanying Design and Access Statement along with commentary regarding the evolution of the scheme in response to the pre-application advice, primarily to move away from the more formal style previously proposed to a more rustic, farmhouse vernacular.

- 5.14 It is material that this design and siting approach has precedence in the recent redevelopment at Upper Culham House (application ref. 172862). The Council accepted this shift, noting it would still reflect elements of local character and would not detract from the rural setting. Similarly, the replacement dwelling was repositioned slightly further east and on higher ground, but still within the established curtilage. Officers concluded this would not materially harm openness or the wider character of the Green Belt.
- 5.15 The replacement outbuilding would retain an overall simple, agricultural form, but with more contemporary elements, including additional glazing to the south elevation to maximise outlook and natural light and solar PV located on its roof to maximise sustainability. This approach reflects the wider design strategy across the Site, which includes a shift in architectural expression for the replacement dwelling while maintaining a coherent and considered overall rural style development.
- 5.16 The replacement of the existing outbuilding is designed to remain proportionate and to respect the simple, agrarian appearance of the existing outbuilding, whilst introducing a modest contemporary character to align with the wider design approach for the Site.
- 5.17 Collectively, the replacement dwelling and outbuilding and alterations to the site entrance would result in a more cohesive layout whilst maintaining a rural character with contemporary elements in a coherent and considered design. The proposal is considered to represent a well-considered response to the context and local character of the site, evolved through pre-application engagement, which would accord with policies CP3 and TB21.

Landscape and Character:

- 5.18 Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy requires developments to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale, mass, layout, built form, height and character of the area and must be of high quality design. R1 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that development contribute positively towards and be compatible with the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area
- 5.19 The pre-application response noted that *'the introduction of a new access onto Kentons Lane, alongside the existing access, would result in additional visual clutter and greater visibility. The access could also result in the disruption of the established boundary planting which currently contributes positively to the rural character of the lane. The formalised landscaping including increased hardstanding would also potentially have an urbanising effect which would not be in keeping with the prevailing rural character'*.
- 5.20 The proposal has responded by, as stated above, limiting the amount of hardstanding proposed by returning the existing dwelling's footprint to grassland as well as the previous access/driveway. The proposed landscaping is intended to reflect the rural character of the site and surroundings, avoid

overly formal or urbanising features. It is proposed to have a new natural stone terrace with a gravel path which leads to the proposed wellness building. Furthermore, the landscaping design seeks to tree line the new gravel drive and enhanced grassland to soften boundaries, retain the existing boundary treatments whilst enhancing existing hedgerow with native species and providing planting and native trees to provide further softening. The modest landscaping will appear in keeping with the rural context and effectively assimilate the new buildings within the wider landscape.

- 5.21 In siting terms, the replacement dwelling and outbuilding would be positioned slightly further east than the existing footprint, so that the dwelling addresses Kentons Lane and sits more logically within the revised site layout. The aim is to deliver a more coherent arrangement that consolidates the built form and hard surfacing between the dwelling and road, thereby improving the relationship between the dwelling, the access/drive and the existing outbuildings.
- 5.22 The proposal will result in some change to views from Kentons Lane as a result of the creation of the new access. This change will be mitigated through new native hedging and tree planting to maintain the existing rural character of Kentons Lane, ensure the new boundary appears to a vegetated rural boundary as opposed to an urbanising feature and to screen direct views of the proposed new dwelling.
- 5.23 Views from a distance will also be softened through means of native planting within the boundary of the proposed dwelling and on land beyond, within the Applicant's ownership.
- 5.24 The proposal has sought to limit the amount of hardstanding proposed by proposing to return the existing dwelling's footprint to grassland as well as the previous access/driveway. Proposed gardens are not landscaped to create formal gardens beyond what is necessary to achieve sufficient amenity and enjoyment to the occupier. It is proposed to have a new natural stone terrace with a gravel path which leads to the wellness building. The modest landscaping will not create risk of the Site appearing urbanised nor encroach beyond the residential curtilage into the open countryside.
- 5.25 As identified within the accompanying Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, the proposed dwelling will be visible from views to the east and north-east (as the existing dwelling is). The new buildings will not appear significantly more prominent than the existing buildings on site nor would they appear overly strident within views of the site or impactful on the wider landscape. The proposed design arrangement and its varied massing will reduce its apparent scale and will help to assimilate with the existing built form of the existing cluster of development whilst taking precedents of design from the Site's immediate neighbour, Upper Culham House, and a rural farmhouse vernacular to appear in keeping with the rural surroundings.
- 5.26 The proposed materials and landscaping will further assist in breaking up the buildings elevations in relation to its rural setting in accordance with Policy CP3.

Highways Access and Parking Provision

- 5.27 Core Strategy Policy CP3 seeks safe and convenient access, and Policy CP6 seeks to ensure development does not give rise to unacceptable transport impacts. MDD Policy CC07 requires appropriate levels of on-site parking to be provided in accordance with the Council's adopted standards.
- 5.28 P3 of the Borough Design Guide SPD notes that parking spaces are to be a minimum of 5m x 2.5m and P3 of the Borough Design Guide SPD notes that parking spaces should be safe and convenient,

close to the dwelling and sited to minimise impact upon safety. The proposals would provide sufficient on-site parking which comprises 7no spaces including EV Charging provision in accordance with the adopted parking standards.

- 5.29 The proposal includes a newly formed access to the north of the site. The existing access to the south of the site will be retained for field access. The proposed access is to be provided in the form of a bell-mouth junction arrangement measuring 5m wide with 6m radii adjacent either side with narrowing thereafter. The access remains at 5m wide for the first 14m, narrowing to 3.9m until reaching the hardstanding area within the site.
- 5.30 The application has been supported by swept path analysis, visibility splays and Technical Transport Note which concludes that as the proposal replaces an existing dwelling, it is not expected to result in a material intensification of vehicle movements on Kenton's Lane or the wider highway network, which has been agreed with WBC in the pre-application response.
- 5.31 It further concludes that the proposed new access will be sufficient and as the development will not result in an increase of trip generation that the impact on the highway will not be unacceptable in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CP3, Policy CP6 and MDD Policy CC07.
- 5.32 ***Arboriculture, Ecology and BNG***
- 5.33 Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan aims to protect green infrastructure networks, promote linkages between public open space and the countryside, retain existing trees and establish appropriate landscaping and Policy TB21 requires consideration of the landscape character.
- 5.34 NPPF policy DP3(2)(C) is clear that new development should incorporate and/or connect to a network of high quality, accessible, multifunctional green infrastructure to provide opportunities for recreation and healthy living, strengthen habitats, improve climate change resilience and improve air and water quality. This should include maintaining and enhancing tree cover and incorporating sustainable drainage systems in accordance with policies N3 and F8;
- 5.35 Policy TB23 of the MDD Local Plan requires the incorporation of new biodiversity features, buffers between habitats and species of importance and integration with the wider green infrastructure network.
- 5.36 In accordance with local and statutory requirements the proposal will provide an increase of 10.83% in hedgerow units and an increase of 46.21% in habitat units, well in excess of the minimum requirement. This will be achieved through enhancing hedgerow planting, tree planting, vegetated garden planting and other neutral grassland all secured on site.
- 5.37 The proposal comprises the removal of 6no trees to facilitate the new access and the development. The submitted Tree Report states that none of the proposed trees for removal are significant or important. The scheme also proposes the planting of replacement native trees within the landscaping strategy to soften views, in accordance with Policy TB23. Appropriate measures have been suggested to protect the retained trees during demolition and construction which will be adhered as outlined within the submitted Tree Report.
- 5.38 The submitted Ecological appraisal confirms that mitigation will be required for the demolition of the dwelling and outbuilding which has identified suitability for roosting bats.

- 5.39 The report concludes that given the scale of the proposal, it is possible to deliver the scheme with a range of measures which avoid adverse impacts on the majority of the other identified protected and priority species. These include sensitive timing of the works, careful vegetation removal and sensitive lighting which will be adhered to during demolition and construction phases.

Sustainability

- 5.40 Policy CC04 of the MDD Local Plan and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD require sustainable design and conservation and R21 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that new development contribute to environmental sustainability and the mitigation of climate change.
- 5.41 In accordance with Policy the proposal has responded, as outlined within the Design and Access Statement, by taking a fabric-first, low carbon approach, using orientation, form and fabric to reduce demand, supported by efficient all electric services to remove reliance on fossil fuels.
- 5.42 The all-electric, low carbon strategy includes:
- Air-source heat pump for space heating and hot water;
 - Photovoltaic (PV) array on south facing roof slope of the Wellness building;
 - Battery storage to make use of the PV generated electricity;
 - Whole house mechanical ventilation with heat recovery;
 - Low flow temperature underfloor heating and;
 - EV Charging and cycle storage
- 5.43 Durable low-maintenance materials have been selected to perform long term, delivering a warm, low energy home that uses far less energy to heat than the dwelling it replaces. Materials wherever possible are proposed to be sourced locally and responsibly prioritising durability, low toxicity and recyclability.

Other Matters

Flooding and Drainage

- 5.44 MDD Policy CC10 requires development to incorporate appropriate sustainable drainage measures, and Policy CC09 requires development to avoid and manage flood risk.
- 5.45 The Site lies within Flood Zone 1. A drainage strategy would be submitted as part of any future planning application to demonstrate that surface water is managed appropriately the proposals would not increase flood risk on-site or elsewhere, with SuDS principles incorporated where feasible.
- 5.46 The SuDS strategy comprises:
- Infiltration SuDS (soakaways)
 - Permeable surfacing to the driveway and hardstanding, reducing run-off at source
 - Rainwater harvesting and water butts, reusing roof water and reducing potable demand
 - Attenuation storage where required

- 5.47 Foul drainage will be managed by connection to the existing arrangement.
- 5.48 This approach will deliver betterment over the existing built form, achieving no net increase, and where practicable a reduction in surface water runoff in accordance with Policy CC09.

Heritage

- 5.49 MDD Policy TB24 requires that proposals conserve and, where relevant, enhance designated heritage assets and their settings.
- 5.50 There are no listed buildings on the Site and it is not located within a conservation area. A Grade II* registered park and garden (Park Place and Temple Combe) lies to the west, however, the proposals are intended to preserve the setting and significance of this designated heritage asset as outlined in the accompanying LVIA, noting that the proposal seeks to limit impact on the character of the wider rural setting.

Amenity

- 5.51 Policy TB07 of the MDD and R17 of the Borough Design Guide SPD require adequate internal space to ensure the layout and size achieves good internal amenity. R18 of the SPD requires sufficient sunlight and daylight to new properties, with dwellings afforded a reasonable dual outlook and southern aspect.
- 5.52 The proposed internal layout ensures that the main living area will face south-east to capture morning and midday sun and daylight. The rest of the habitable rooms are also served with sufficient outlook and daylight and thus complying with Local Policy.
- 5.53 Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenity is also satisfied due to the Site's relationship with the neighbouring dwelling to the north will result in no loss of light, no overbearing or overlooking impact.

6 Summary and Conclusions

6.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Smith Jenkins Planning & Heritage on behalf of Mr Ryan Somauroo in relation to the proposed *demolition of existing dwelling and associated outbuilding, erection of replacement dwelling and outbuilding, creation of new access and associated landscaping works* at Youngs Farm, Kentons Lane, Upper Culham, RG10 8NX

6.2 As demonstrated above, the application is considered to accord with the development plan regarding matters of principle, design and landscape character, transport, residential amenity, trees, ecology, heritage and sustainability.

6.3 The matters raised within the pre-application response have been addressed as follows:

Principle of development within the Green Belt – the massing and volume of the building has been reduced to be below the limits that the Council have outlined to be acceptable to not constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt, with a 34% increase in volume relative to the original dwelling;

Design - the dwelling has been re-designed following a farmhouse vernacular to be more in keeping with the rural setting and precedent of design taken from the neighbouring dwelling to ensure that it would appear in keeping with its rural surroundings;

Landscape and visual impacts – a detailed assessment of the scheme and its impact within the wider landscape and views of the site has been prepared and used to inform the design evolution to minimise impacts;

Landscape design – the proposed landscape design has similarly evolved to reflect the rural character of the site and surroundings to avoid urbanisation of the site and to soften views of the site within the wider rural landscape.

6.4 For these reasons, and in the absence of any other material considerations to suggest otherwise, the application is therefore commended to be approved by the LPA in accordance with the statutory timescales.