



Appeal Decision

Hearing held on 29 October 2025

Site visits made on 29 October 2025 and 30 October 2025

by Paul Martinson BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/W/25/3364223

Land Adjacent To Anderdons Farm, Longwick HP27 9SY

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Lucy Developments Limited against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council - West Area (Wycombe).
 - The application Ref is 24/05758/FUL.
 - The development proposed is Construction of four dwellings with associated car parking, hard and soft landscaping and access from Thame Road.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council has confirmed that, following the submission of the completed s.106 legal agreement (S106), reasons for refusal in respect of transport contributions and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) are no longer matters of concern. I see no reason to conclude otherwise.
3. As the appeal site lies within a Red Impact Risk Zone for Great Crested Newts (GCNs), a Protected Species, there is a high likelihood of GCNs being present. Part of reason for refusal No 5 was in relation to a lack of detail of mitigation for potential effects on GCN. The Council holds a District Level Licence (DLL) issued by Natural England, which provides an alternative, strategic approach to managing impacts on GCNs. The appellant has now entered into this scheme and there are now no objections from the Council's Ecology section. The District Licence Report, dated 16 July 2025, sets out the specific conditions that must be applied. These conditions ensure that the proposal complies with the terms of the DLL and that appropriate ecological safeguards are in place to avoid any harm to Protected Species. The appellant has therefore addressed this element of the Council's refusal, and the Council has withdrawn its objection. I see no reason to disagree, and my main issues below are on this basis.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the local area bearing in mind the special attention that should be paid to the desirability of preserving the setting of the nearby Grade II listed buildings;

- Whether the proposal would provide a mix of housing units which can be demonstrated to reflect the needs of the village;
- The effect of the proposal on highway safety with particular regard to parking provision;
- Whether an adequate buffer zone is proposed to a watercourse having regard to the effect on biodiversity; and
- The effect of the proposal on flood risk.

Reasons

Character and Appearance/Heritage Assets

Anderdons Farmhouse

5. Anderdons Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building located 20 metres to the north west of the appeal site. The house is a classically proportioned mid to late eighteenth century farmhouse with polite influences, extending to two storeys with attic rooms. With its expansive hipped and tiled roof and prominent chimneys, this is the dominant building of this group which comprises of the flanking former outbuildings and the farmyard and range of barns (now converted to residential use) to the rear. The elegant front elevation of the farmhouse is rendered and comprises of five bays with tall 'six over six' sliding sash windows.
6. The special interest and significance of the listed building derive from its architectural and historic interest as an example of a large Georgian farmstead. Key contributors in this regard are the elegant Georgian architecture of the house, its surviving historic fabric and its group value arising from its relationship with its former outbuildings and farmyard.
7. The building is orientated so that its elegant façade looks onto its garden area to the south east. The south eastern boundary of the garden is defined by a tall conifer hedge. This is the boundary with the appeal site. A further, larger, garden lies to the north including a swimming pool and small domestic outbuildings. This widens beyond the appeal site and abuts its northern edge with a close boarded fence defining the boundary here. Whilst the conifer hedge blocks views across it present, the appeal site was previously in the ownership of Anderdons Farm.
8. Given the comparatively short nature of the garden to the south east, the farmhouse was clearly built to look away from the working yard to the rear and enjoy an open aspect across the appeal site from its principal elevation. The appeal site was formerly an orchard which was previously associated with Anderdons Farm, although they have been in separate ownership for some time. Anderdons Farmhouse thus has a historic relationship and former functional association with the appeal site that is reflective of its agricultural past. The undeveloped and open nature of the appeal site enables an understanding and appreciation of the agricultural origins of Anderdons Farm.
9. The conifer hedge has a negative impact on the setting of the listed building due to its disruption of the visual relationship between the appeal site and Anderdons Farm, impacting on the ability to appreciate the functional and historic association between the two sites. Open views across the appeal site are now limited to those that can be gained from the first floor windows of Anderdons Farmhouse.

10. Nevertheless, owing to its scale, the upper parts of the house at Anderdons Farmhouse can be seen, above the hedge, from the appeal site, and in views across the appeal site from the public right of way to the south east. The listed building thus retains a visual and physical relationship with the nearby agricultural land. Anderdons Farmhouse is also seen alongside the appeal site from Thame Road, albeit views of the whole site are limited by boundary treatments. Nevertheless, this wider rural, agricultural context ensures that, despite the suburban nature of much of the settlement, the surroundings to Anderdons Farmhouse retain a rural character.
11. The appeal site thus forms part of the surroundings within which Anderdons Farmhouse is experienced and, overall, contributes positively to its special interest and significance.

Anderdons Farm Cottage and Barn To West of Anderdons Farm Cottage

12. Today referred to as Strattons Farm, this Grade II listed house and separately Grade II listed barn, form part of a grouping of buildings that are set back a considerable distance from Thame Road.
13. Anderdons Farm Cottage is a small brick timber framed house dating to the sixteenth century with mid eighteenth century alterations. The special interest and significance of Anderdons Farm Cottage derives from its considerable age, surviving historic fabric, including intact timber framing and its group value, being seen alongside the adjacent buildings.
14. Barn To West of Anderdons Farm Cottage is an attached timber framed weatherboarded barn dating to the eighteenth century. It comprises of three bays with a central wagon entry and is now converted to additional living accommodation. Its special interest and significance are largely derived from its surviving historic fabric, use of traditional materials and construction techniques, and its group value.
15. Set back from the neighbouring properties, this pair of listed buildings share a rural agricultural setting that ensures that the agricultural origins of this building group continue to be evident. The appeal site, located to the north west, beyond open land, forms part of this wider rural setting from which their special interest and significance is also derived, in a similar manner to Anderdons Farm. The Strattons Farm buildings are visible from within the appeal site and contributes positively in this respect.

Redhouse Farmhouse, Granary Adjacent to South of Redhouse Farmhouse, and Barn Circa 20 Metres to South West of Redhouse Farmhouse.

16. Redhouse Farmhouse is a Grade II listed seventeenth century farmhouse that was rebuilt in the mid eighteenth century. Comprising of red and vitreous brick walls with timber framing, and a tiled roof, its special interest and significance derive from its architectural and historic interest as a rebuilt eighteenth century farmhouse. Key contributors in this regard are its surviving historic fabric and its group value deriving from its connection to its former granary (Grade II listed) and barn (Grade II listed) that are now both converted to separate dwellings. Contributing to each other's special interest and significance and lying within each other's setting, this also derives from their wider setting within the northern part of Longwick which retains a rural, agricultural character.

17. The appeal site, lying to the opposite side of Thame Road to this grouping forms an area of undeveloped green space that alludes to the agricultural past of this part of the village and contributes significantly to this rural character. Although there is limited intervisibility between the appeal site and the Redhouse Farmhouse grouping, the appeal site nonetheless lies within the surroundings in which it is experienced and contributes positively to its wider rural setting.

Vine Cottage – Non-Designated Heritage Asset

18. This building has been designated as a locally listed building since the determination of the application. It is a double fronted cottage with chequered brickwork to the front elevation and a pitched, old clay tiled roof. Dating to the nineteenth century, it retains its original '8 over 8' timber sash windows to the frontage and is set back behind a small front garden making a positive contribution to the streetscene. These are elements of the building that contribute to its significance as a non-designated heritage asset. Significance also derives from its wider rural setting which includes the appeal site, which lies across the small watercourse that separates it from the garden of Vine Cottage.

Wider Rural Character

19. Together the former farmsteads of Anderdons Farm, Strattons Farm and Redhouse Farm form a loose group of dispersed buildings informally arranged along Thame Road. Their respective open, rural, settings, described above, overlap here and the agricultural origins of this part of the village is consequentially highly evident along Thame Road here. Whilst the majority of Longwick has a somewhat suburban nature, the northern edge of the village becomes more rural in character before meeting open countryside. The streetscene opens out from around the Old Forge, with considerably more vegetation, buildings are more spread out and views of green fields are gained in the gaps between buildings and beyond. Historic mapping illustrates that this dispersed rural character is long established in this part of the village.
20. As is clear from my assessment of the significance of the heritage assets above, the appeal site makes an important contribution to the historic and distinctly rural and agricultural character of this part of Longwick. I am satisfied that this rural character is not significantly eroded by the presence of the busy thoroughfare of Thame Road.

Proposals and Effects

21. The appeal site is a site allocated for new residential development through Policy L6 of the Longwick-cum-Ilmer Neighbourhood Plan (2018).
22. The proposal would involve the construction of four dwellings on the appeal site. The dwellings would mostly be of a substantial scale. Owing, in part, to this scale and their considerable footprints, it would result in dwellings and boundary features directly abutting the hardsurfacing associated with the access road and parking areas. This would contribute to a constrained, tightly arranged streetscape with very little soft landscaping visible along the access road for almost all of its length. The loss of the green space and the introduction of a development of this manner would have a highly urbanising effect on this part of the village, significantly diminishing the rural character here. This would not be significantly mitigated by the provision of the proposed orchard to the site's fringes.

23. The dwelling at Plot 2 and the extensive hardsurfacing associated with the parking/turning area would be provided adjacent to the boundary facing the principal element of Anderdons Farmhouse. This erosion of the green space and the wider introduction of a substantial amount of built form across the site would have the effect of detaching Anderdons Farmhouse from the agricultural landscape and diminishing the rurality of its setting. In doing so it would erode the legibility of the historic functional and physical relationships between the appeal site and the listed building of Anderdons Farmhouse.
24. I am not of the view that the presence of the conifer hedge would aid in mitigating the harm that would arise to the setting of Anderdons Farmhouse and moreover, I am mindful that it could be easily removed in the future and replaced with a lower boundary feature. The fast growing and shading potential of conifer hedges, increases the likelihood of this.
25. The significant urbanisation of the appeal site and the provision of a substantial dwelling with considerable length, height and massing at Plot 3, adjacent to the south eastern boundary of the site would be easily visible from the listed buildings at Strattons Farm. This, alongside the wider urbanisation of the appeal site would diminish the rural qualities of the setting of these listed buildings, eroding their connection with the wider agricultural landscape, albeit to a lesser extent than Anderdons Farm.
26. The urbanisation of the appeal site and its effect on the rural character of this part of Longwick would also negatively affect how the listed buildings at Redhouse Farm are appreciated, and their rural agricultural setting would be diminished. Similarly, and for the same reasons as those set out above, the rural setting of Vine Cottage would be eroded, to the detriment of its significance.
27. The proposal would not maintain the open character of this part of the village as set out in the justification to Policy L6 of the NP. Moreover, I am unable to conclude that the roof forms and development layouts would minimise long distance visibility, nor that it would respect the setting of the adjacent listed buildings, which are also requirements of Policy L6.
28. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the proposal would adversely affect the character and appearance of the local area and would fail to preserve the settings of the nearby Grade II listed buildings of Anderdons Farmhouse, Anderdons Farm Cottage, Barn To West of Anderdons Farm Cottage, Redhouse Farmhouse, Granary Adjacent to South of Redhouse Farmhouse, and Barn Circa 20 Metres to South West of Redhouse Farmhouse. The harm to their settings would adversely affect the special interest and significance of these listed buildings. This would be contrary to the requirements of section 66(1) of the Act¹.

Public Benefits and Balance

29. Having regard to my above reasoning, collectively, I consider the harm to designated heritage assets to be a moderate level of 'less than substantial' harm as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Paragraph 215 advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

¹ Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

30. The proposal would result in the delivery of new homes that would contribute towards boosting supply, in a housing area where housing is being underdelivered. Owing to the scale of the proposal, for four dwellings, that contribution to housing supply in the area would be modest. Nonetheless, it would make a contribution, and this carries moderate weight in favour of the scheme.
31. The provision of the orchard area has been proposed as a heritage benefit by the appellant. I acknowledge that this area would be beneficial to the scheme in terms of partly limiting the extent of development close to the boundary with Anderdons Farmhouse. Nevertheless, the proposed orchard would occupy a very small area and its visual impact is limited by its 'L' shape; wrapping around the rear garden of Plot 3 and squeezed into the north western corner of the appeal site. It would be set away from the principal element of Anderdons Farmhouse at the point of the adjoining adjacent field, being located further north. It would also be very narrow in width and as such, seen alongside the boundary treatments of the garden of Plot 3 as well as that substantial dwelling, in views from the public right of way, its benefit in terms of an enhancement to Anderdons Farmhouse would be limited. Whilst it would allude to the former use of this area as an orchard, for the reasons set out above, it would constitute a limited heritage benefit.
32. There would be economic benefits arising from the development of the site and from the occupation of the dwellings. This would contribute to the local economy. However, these benefits would be limited by the scale of the proposal and carry limited to moderate weight. Some benefits would also occur through the delivery of off-site and on-site BNG secured through the S106. These are, nevertheless, requirements to mitigate the effects of the proposed development and comply with policies in the development plan, as set out above. They therefore carry limited weight.
33. I have taken into account in my reasoning that this is a site allocated for new housing in the NP and I appreciate that change to the rural character of this part of the village and the settings of the adjacent listed buildings is inevitable. However, I have a statutory duty to consider the proposal having regard to the requirements of the Act.
34. I also recognise that this scheme follows an earlier refusal of planning permission for five dwellings and that the appellant has sought to address previous concerns in this iteration. It has not been demonstrated, however, that the development needs to take the particular form that it does.
35. Overall, I consider that collectively, the proposal generates moderate public benefits. The Framework requires me to give great weight to the conservation of heritage assets. Moreover, any harm to the significance of designated heritage assets should require clear and convincing justification, which, despite the extent of public benefits as evidenced, I find not to be the case in the appeal scheme before me.
36. As such, whilst the public benefits carry moderate weight in favour of the proposal, this is not sufficient to outweigh the considerable importance and weight I attach to the identified harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets.
37. The proposal would fail to preserve the settings of the nearby Grade II listed buildings of Anderdons Farmhouse, Anderdons Farm Cottage, Barn To West of Anderdons Farm Cottage, Redhouse Farmhouse, Granary Adjacent to South of

Redhouse Farmhouse, and Barn Circa 20 Metres to South West of Redhouse Farmhouse. This would be contrary to the expectations of the Act. Harm would also occur to the setting of the non-designated heritage asset, Vine Cottage.

38. The harmful impact would conflict with Policies CP9, CP10, CP11, DM20, DM31, DM32 and DM35 of the Wycombe District Local Plan (2019) (the LP) which, amongst other things, together, seek to ensure new proposals are well designed and preserve the character and appearance of the area including preserving the settings of heritage assets and landscape character. Conflict would also occur with Policy L6 of the NP, described above. There would also be conflict with the provisions within the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance heritage assets.

Housing Mix

39. Policy L6 of the NP requires the proposed development to provide a mix of housing units which can be demonstrated to reflect the needs of the village.
40. The appellant argues that the Buckinghamshire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment 2015 (2016) (HEDNA) at Figure 124 demonstrates a District-wide need for three and four bedroom homes. However, it also indicates a District-wide need for one and two bedroom homes. Moreover, the need for three and four bedroom homes at the former District level does not reflect the housing needs of Longwick in particular.
41. In my experience, the housing needs of villages surrounded by open countryside with a more limited number of services, are likely to be different to those of the main urban settlement of Wycombe for example. Nonetheless, the appellant has provided a Housing Market Report (HMR) to address this matter at appeal. This analyses sale rates in the Longwick/Princes Risborough area which it argues demonstrates that there continues to be a strong demand for three bedroom and four bedroom homes. Furthermore, the sales data demonstrates that the demand for family sized three bedroom and four bedroom homes is outstripping supply.
42. Whilst there may be a high market demand for three and four bedroom homes, demand from the market for housing in a settlement is not always consistent with the housing needs of that settlement. Indeed, in my experience, the two may often pull in different directions. The appellant has not supplied a specific housing needs assessment, nor does there appear to have been any significant local consultation with regard to housing need.
43. Policy A1 of the NP supports new housing within development limits, including on allocated sites. The justification for Policy A1 states that, to achieve a greater mix of accommodation in the village a re-balancing is needed which equates to the need for more one, two and three bedroom homes or a mix which responds to the HEDNA's findings. Nonetheless as greater than 50% of the homes in the Wycombe area are required to be three bedroom homes, as set out in Figure 124, the proposal does not reflect the proportions in the HEDNA in any case.
44. The Council has referenced the recently published (June 2025) Longwick-cum-Ilmer Neighbourhood Plan Housing Needs Assessment. This highlights that an increase in the population of older households suggests a growing need for smaller, more manageable homes suitable for downsizing in the village. It also notes that the median house price in Longwick-cum-Ilmer is significantly higher

than the national average and that smaller homes would be more accessible to a broader range of income levels. It sets out that Longwick-cum-Ilmer already has a high proportion of larger homes and a notable underrepresentation of smaller homes. I am mindful that this is not an adopted policy or guidance, it nonetheless supports my above assessment that the need for the housing mix proposed has not been demonstrated.

45. For the above reasons I therefore conclude that it has not been demonstrated that the proposed mix of housing units would reflect the needs of the village. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policy L6 of the NP on this basis. There would also be conflict with the aims of the Framework which seeks to ensure housing sites come forward with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community.

Highway Safety

46. Thame Road is a busy 'A' road carrying high volumes of traffic. Whilst there are no parking or waiting restrictions along the length of this road in the vicinity of the appeal site, I observed that any vehicles likely to park here would likely obstruct the traffic flow, requiring vehicles to enter the lane of oncoming traffic to overtake, to the detriment of the convenience of road users and highway safety.
47. The appeal scheme proposes three parking spaces per plot, totalling twelve spaces across the site. Buckinghamshire Countywide Parking Guidance Policy (2015) (BCPGP) provides parking standards for the Council area. The standards are based upon census extrapolated data on habitable rooms and its relation to the number of vehicles recorded per household. As such, the parking standards are primarily based on the number of habitable rooms, rather than number of bedrooms. On this basis, the BCPGP gives the required number of parking spaces as fourteen in total, with four spaces for Plot 3 and Plot 4 and three spaces for Plot 1 and Plot 2, based on the Highway Authority's calculations. This amounts to a total of fourteen spaces required as part of the appeal scheme.
48. The appellant has directed me to the section of the BCPGP which states that when there are significant differences between parking provision based on bedrooms and habitable rooms, the most appropriate amount of parking should be provided. The BCPGP gives the example of where a dwelling is open plan.
49. However, this is clearly on the basis that significant areas of open plan floorspace would result in a comparatively low number of habitable rooms and consequent under-provision of car parking space for the size of the dwelling. In such scenarios one would expect the number of bedrooms to indicate a requirement for a greater number of car parking spaces, rather than less.
50. Nevertheless, the proposed dwellings are not particularly open plan, with all having at least a separate kitchen, living room and study downstairs. I therefore do not see that this represents clear justification for deviating from the census extrapolated data on habitable rooms, particularly given the large size of Plot 3 and Plot 4. Given the constrained nature of the access road within the site, the potential displacement of vehicles arising from inadequate parking provision, could occur within the turning area, restricting access and turning for other vehicles, including emergency vehicles.

51. In such circumstances, larger vehicles may be forced to reverse into Thame Road, to the detriment of highway safety. Furthermore, under provision of parking within the site would almost certainly lead to vehicles parking on Thame Road, resulting in a significant adverse impact on highway safety and the convenience of road users, as set out above.
52. I therefore conclude that the proposal would adversely affect highway safety with particular regard to parking provision. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policy DM33 of the LP which seeks to ensure new development is provided with safe and convenient access to the local highway network for all modes and provides sufficient parking to meet the needs of future occupants, avoiding significant adverse impact from overspill parking.
53. There would also be a conflict with paragraph 117 of the Framework which seeks to ensure new development creates places that are safe, minimising the conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. For the reasons set out above, there would also be conflict with the guidance contained within the BCPGP. There would be similar conflicts with the Buckinghamshire Council Local Transport Plan 4 (2016) and Buckinghamshire Council Highways Development Management Guidance (2018), both of which support the use of the parking standards contained within the BCPGP in the interests of highway safety.

Buffer Zone

54. Policy DM15 of the Wycombe Delivery and Sites Allocation Plan (2013) (DSAP) seeks, in the interests of biodiversity, landscape and recreational value that development proposals adjacent to a watercourse should provide or retain a 10 metre buffer between the top of the river-bank and the development, and include a long term landscape and ecological management plan for this buffer. The 10 metre buffer should be maintained as a natural or seminatural habitat free from built development, parking areas, private gardens and formal landscaping.
55. The application included the built form of Plot 4 and its parking areas as well as its garden extending into the buffer zone. The amended plans that have been provided at appeal show the dwelling no longer encroaching into this area. The appellant argues that this has reduced the amount of developed land within the buffer zone from approximately 48% to 34%. This developed land comprises of hardstanding forming the access road and part of the parking area. Nonetheless much of this space still includes the garden walls and garden of Plot 4.
56. The watercourse comprises of a narrow channel with a steep bank to either side. Both bank sides are partly overgrown with vegetation and shrubbery. The level of the watercourse was very low at the time of my visit. The Council confirmed in the Hearing that the buffer zone should be measured from the top of the bank of the watercourse. Having examined this on the site, the fence delineating the boundary of the appeal site appears to be broadly consistent with the site boundary shown on the site location plan, all of which lies either at the top of the bank or just beyond that point. On the basis of what is before me, notwithstanding the concerns of third parties expressed at the Hearing, I am therefore satisfied that the 10 metre buffer zone is drawn to a reasonable level of accuracy.
57. I acknowledge that, owing to the position of the existing access and the culverted nature of the watercourse to the west of the appeal site, the inclusion of the access road within the 10 metre buffer zone cannot be avoided. Nevertheless, I see no

reason why the proposed layout needs to include hardsurfacing, garden areas and boundary features within this zone. DSAP Policy DM15 is clear that such elements should be excluded from the buffer zone.

58. Although there is little recreation value to the watercourse, it is beneficial to the landscape, owing in part to its inclusion of several small trees and shrubs, and has value as a riparian wildlife corridor. The area comprising the proposed buffer zone within the site is currently open and undeveloped. The inclusion of private garden, hardsurfacing and solid boundary features within this area would impact negatively on its lateral connectivity as a wildlife corridor.
59. Whilst I consider the proposed species to be planted within the buffer zone could be secured by a planning condition, for the above reasons I conclude that the proposal would fail to provide an adequate buffer zone to the watercourse, which would adversely impact its function as a riparian corridor, to the detriment of biodiversity. The proposal would conflict with DSAP Policy DM15, described above, on this basis. There would also be conflict with Policies DM11 and DM13 of the DSAP which together set out that green infrastructure and habitats will be conserved and enhanced, paying special attention to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, including in respect of rivers and streams and their associated corridors. Conflict would also occur with Policy DM34 of the DSAP which requires all development to protect and enhance both biodiversity and green infrastructure features and networks both on and off-site for the lifetime of development.

Flood Risk

60. The Environment Agency Flood Maps (the EA Maps) identify the appeal site as being within Flood Zone 1. As set out in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), that zone is defined as having a 'low probability' of fluvial flooding from Main Rivers. The appeal site was allocated in the NP having regard to the Wycombe Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2014) (SFRA) and following a sequential test undertaken and passed in 2018. This was despite the site lying within or adjacent to a Critical Drainage Area, set out in the SFRA. Policy L6 of the NP sets out that the site plays a role in the drainage system within the village, as it is adjacent to the stream ditch that will need to be fully maintained and safeguarded as part of any development proposals.
61. Paragraph 180 of the Framework sets out that where planning applications come forward on sites allocated in the development plan through the sequential test, applicants need not apply the sequential test again. However, the exception test may need to be reapplied if relevant aspects of the proposal had not been considered when the test was applied at the plan-making stage, or if more recent information about existing or potential flood risk should be taken into account.
62. I am provided with little detail from either party as to whether the exception test was applied as part of the allocation of the site in the NP. Nevertheless, I note that the SFRA does identify this as a Critical Drainage Area and the Policy Map for the NP clearly identifies the appeal site as being subject to what appears to be predominantly a 'Medium Risk' of surface water flooding. It is therefore evident that vulnerability to surface water flooding must have been taken into account as part of its allocation and that this is not information that has emerged more recently.

63. Nonetheless Policy DM39 of the LP sets out that all development will be directed to areas at least risk of flooding and will be required to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding both on and off-site. This is consistent with paragraph 181 of the Framework which seeks to ensure that, when determining any planning application, local planning authorities ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere.
64. The stream ditch referenced is an ordinary watercourse with a catchment of 1.63 square kilometres. The limitations in national flood modelling datasets do not take into account watercourses with this small a catchment and consequently fluvial flooding from the watercourse is not accounted for in the data. The site does however lie within an area at risk of surface water flooding as designated by the EA Maps. The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) sets out that the surface water flooding provides a proxy measure of the extent of fluvial flooding associated with the watercourse.
65. The appellant has satisfactorily evidenced that the LiDAR data contributing to the surface water flood mapping does not accurately represent the actual contours of the ground at the appeal site. I am therefore satisfied that the appellant's topographical survey data is more accurate than the surface water mapping used to inform the SFRA. This shows that the site slopes across its length with the watercourse being the lowest point. This is supported by the new 2022 updated LiDAR data, provided by the appellant, which also more accurately reflects the position of the watercourse channel and the topography of the appeal site than the SFRA surface water maps.
66. In addition, the appellant has commissioned hydraulic modelling, completed in line with the latest national-scale approach outlined by the Environment Agency. The modelled flood levels identify that the flow path of surface water is along the southern boundary adjacent to the offsite watercourse rather than through the centre of the site as the 2014 SFRA maps indicate.
67. However, the model has limitations which cause me to doubt its reliability. The model does not include upstream features within the watercourse such as bridges which could interrupt flows. Furthermore, it assumes that outflow to the culvert would be consistent in how it reacted with water even if it were submerged as part of a flood event. Moreover, it does not consider in detail the eventuality where a blockage would restrict or prevent the flow along the culvert.
68. Whilst I appreciate the appellant argues that the culvert would not cause any restriction in flow up to and including the 1 in 100 year return period, the evidence before me is limited in that regard. Furthermore, whilst I agree that footbridges and other features along the watercourse are more likely to slow flow than increase it, I cannot be certain of the precise interaction that would occur and its effect downstream as it has not been modelled.
69. Additionally, the model clearly illustrates that the development will lead to an increase in flood depth and extent, both upstream of the site (to the east), and to the south east of the site. This area includes Strattons Farm and Vine Cottage to the east, and Brooklea Barn to the south. Whilst it is argued that this would be a very small increase, being around 5 centimetres, notwithstanding the aforementioned limitations of the model, this would still result in an increase in flood risk elsewhere.

70. I acknowledge that an assessment of flood risk was undertaken as part of the site's allocation in the NP. Nevertheless, on the basis of my above assessment I am unable to conclude that the proposed development is located in the area of the site at the lowest flood risk. Having regard to the evidence before me, the presence of listed buildings nearby does not justify the siting of the dwellings within an area at risk of flooding.
71. For the reasons set out above, it has not been demonstrated that the risk of flooding could be safely mitigated over the lifetime of the development, nor has it been demonstrated that it would not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. This would be contrary to Policy DM39 of the LP and paragraphs 170 and 181 of the Framework which together, seek to ensure new development can be safely mitigated against flood risk and does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

Planning Obligation

72. As set out above, a signed section S106, dated 29 October 2025, has been received. Schedule 2 relates to securing the BNG and its long term management in accordance with Policy DM34 of the LP. Schedule 3 relates to the provision of a transport contribution to enable a higher quality peak hour public transport service in Longwick in accordance in line with the requirements of Policy A2 of the NP and Policy DM2 of the DSAP.
73. I consider the above obligations set out in the S106 are necessary to make the development acceptable with regard to biodiversity and transport. I am also satisfied that they are directly related to the development and are fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind. As such they meet the tests set out in Regulation 122(2) of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 and paragraph 58 of the Framework.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

74. The Council can only demonstrate 1.98 years worth of deliverable housing sites, which is understood to represent an undersupply of approximately 4,491 homes. Acknowledging this significant shortfall, the proposal would make a minor contribution towards housing supply. This would represent a public benefit of the scheme. More minor benefits would arise in terms of the effect on the local economy and the provision of BNG as referred to above.
75. Paragraph 11 d) of the Framework states that in such circumstances permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect assets or areas of particular importance provide a strong reason for refusing the development. Footnote 7 indicates that designated heritage assets and areas at risk of flooding are such assets or areas. I have found that the proposal would amount to a moderate level of less than substantial harm to the settings of the nearby listed buildings as set out above. I have also been unable to conclude that the proposal would be safe from flooding for its lifetime and that it would not lead to an increase in flooding elsewhere. These conflicts with the Framework that I have set out above provide a strong reason for refusing the proposal in any event, and the presumption in favour of sustainable development is not engaged.
76. This is an allocated site, a material consideration that I have weighed in favour of the appeal. Nonetheless, the allocation is subject to a number of criteria set out in Policy L6 of the NP, which I have found not to be met. In that regard, in addition to

the matters relating to flood risk and listed buildings, it has not been demonstrated that the scheme as proposed would reflect the needs of the village. It would also adversely affect the character and appearance of the area, fail to provide an adequate buffer zone to a watercourse, and would fail to provide sufficient off-street parking.

77. Whilst I acknowledge the benefits of the scheme, these do not justify taking an approach that would be contrary to the adopted development plan, having regard to the requirements of section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Framework. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Paul Martinson

INSPECTOR