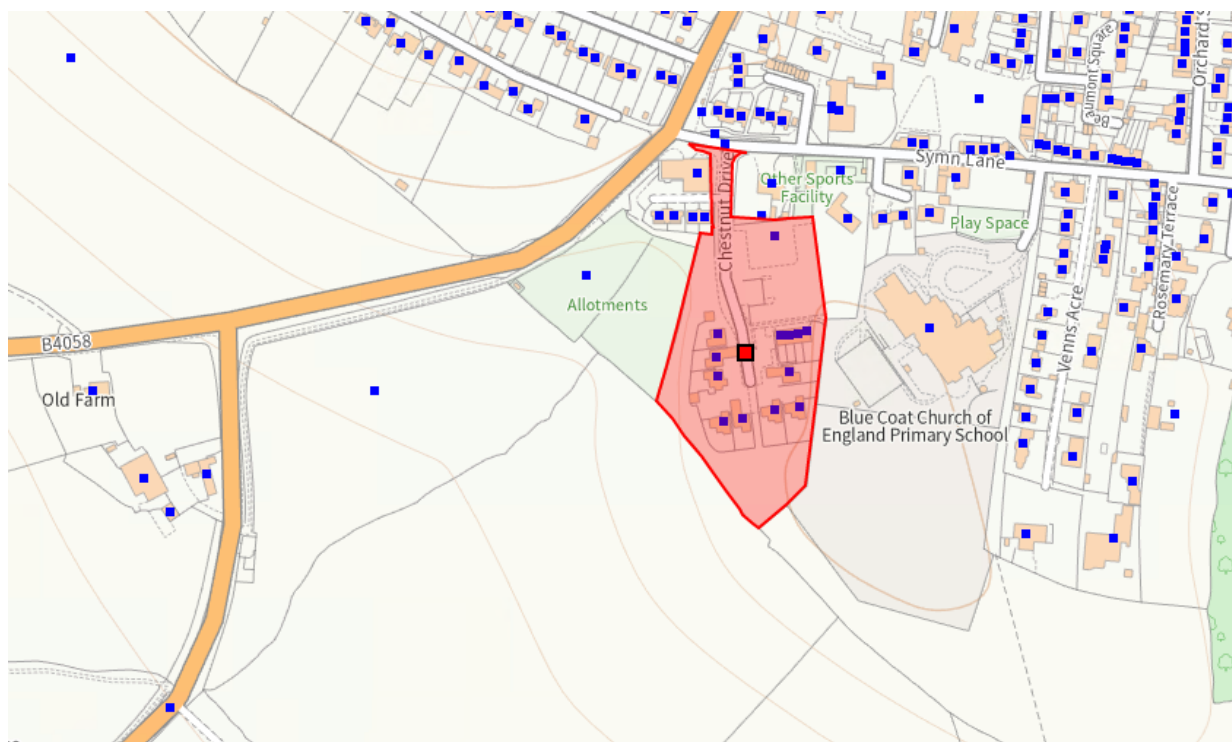




Development Control Committee Schedule 02/12/2025

Item No:	02
Application No.	S.23/2101/VAR
Site Address	Land South of The Chipping Surgery, Symn Lane, Wotton-Under-Edge, Gloucestershire
Town/Parish	Wotton Under Edge Town Council
Grid Reference	375482,192982
Application Type	Variation of Condition
Proposal	Variation of Condition 2 (approved plans) and 4 (landscaping) of application no. S.19/1722/VAR to vary car park layout, provide additional landscaping and ancillary works.
Recommendation	Resolve to Grant Permission
Call in Request	Requested by Head of Planning





Development Control Committee Schedule 02/12/2025

Applicant's Details	GHR Developments Ltd, C/o Agent, , ,
Agent's Details	Mr J Ayoubkhani Highlight Planning, Office 33, 14 Neptune Court, Vanguard Way, Cardiff CF24 5PJ
Case Officer	John Chaplin
Application Validated	24.10.2023
	CONSULTEES
Comments Received	Contaminated Land Officer (E)
Constraints	Affecting the Setting of a Cons Area Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Berkeley Safeguard Area Consult area Within 50m of Listed Building Neighbourhood Plan Wotton under Edge Town Council Settlement Boundaries (LP) Single Tree Preservation Order Points Village Design Statement
	OFFICER'S REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site is located on the edge of Wotton adjacent to the allotments, doctors surgery, the fire station and the Blue Coats School.

Work has progressed on the approved car park scheme and associated housing. The new access road between the doctors and the fire station has been provided to binder course and the houses completed with most occupied. The main car park area's construction is also advanced.

On the site to the rear of the Fire station training tower is located a mature horse chestnut tree. This is protected by a Tree Preservation Order.

The site is located outside the defined settlement of the town but is within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty/ National Landscape.

PROPOSAL

This proposal seeks to vary the approved scheme S.19/1722/VAR (a variation of the original S.17/2307/FUL). The proposal removed a bay of parking spaces adjacent to the access road and replaces it with fence and landscaping/planting. An additional parking area is proposed adjacent to the main car park area to provide additional spaces and disabled parking provision.



Development Control Committee Schedule 02/12/2025

REVISED DETAILS

Updated car park layout and updated landscaping plans have been received on 25 October 2025.

NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework.

Available to view at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

Stroud District Local Plan November 2015

Policies together with the preamble text and associated supplementary planning documents are available to view on the Council's website:

https://www.stroud.gov.uk/media/1455/stroud-district-local-plan_november-2015_low-res_for-web.pdf

Local Plan policies considered for this application include:

- CP1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- CP2 - Strategic growth and development locations.
- CP3 - Settlement Hierarchy.
- CP4 - Place Making.
- CP5 - Environmental development principles for strategic growth.
- CP6 - Infrastructure and developer contributions.
- CP7 - Lifetime communities.
- CP8 - New housing development.
- CP9 - Affordable housing.

- CP12 - Town centres and retailing.
- CP13 - Demand management and sustainable travel measures.
- CP14 - High quality sustainable development.
- CP15 - A quality living and working countryside.

EI12 - Promoting transport choice and accessibility.

- ES1 - Sustainable construction and design.
- ES3 - Maintaining quality of life within our environmental limits.
- ES4 - Water resources, quality and flood risk.
- ES5 - Air quality.
- ES6 - Providing for biodiversity and geodiversity.
- ES7 - Landscape character.
- ES8 - Trees, hedgerows and woodlands.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

S.17/2307/FUL PER Construction of 12 houses with access road and car park for 80 cars and 2 coaches. 01.08.2019



Development Control Committee Schedule 02/12/2025

S.19/1722/VAR PER Variation of condition 2 (app plans) from application
S.17/2307/FUL - replace drawing no. 7734/1D with drawing no. 7734/1F to adjust the levels
(375482-192982) 03.06.2020

S.19/1664/DISCON SPLIT Discharge of conditions 3 (External materials), 4 (Landscape scheme), 6 (External lighting), 7 (Construction method statement), 10 (Adoptable roads & footpaths), 12 (Cycle parking), 14 (Fire hydrant), 15 (Car charging points), 18 (Operation of car park), 19 (Ecology), 20 (Ecological design strategy), 21 (Tree protection) of permission
S.19/1722/VAR 05.06.2020

S.21/0113/VAR WDN Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans) to remove the affordable housing contribution of S.19/1722/VAR 09.05.2022

S.21/0128/MINAM APPROV Non-material amendment to condition 8 of planning permission S.19/1722/VAR to amend the trigger for implementing the access works.
05.03.2021

S.21/0509/DISCON PER Discharge of Condition 4 (Construction Method Statement) & Condition 5 (Scheme of Soft Landscaping and Boundary Treatment) of S.18/2410/FUL
30.04.2021

S.22/0051/MINAM APPROV Non-material minor amendment to the application
S.19/1722/VAR - Variation to garage for Plot 3 including amendment such that there is a single double door opening rather than 2no. single openings. 21.01.2022

S.22/1029/106R CONSEN Modify the S106 legal agreement S.19/1722/VAR & S.17/2307/FUL to enable occupations of the first 6 open market units prior to entering into contract with a Registered Provider for the Affordable Housing units. 02.12.2022

S.22/1364/DISCON PER Discharge of condition 17 (signage) from the application
S.19/1722/VAR 20.07.2022

S.23/0525/VAR REF Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) & 4 (landscaping) from S.19/1722/VAR to provide additional landscaping in lieu of parking 14.06.2023

REPRESENTATIONS Statutory Consultees:

Wotton Town Council:

Wotton Under Edge Town Council welcomes the positive engagement of the developer and the commitment to the completion of this important car park for the town. The Town Council supports the application together with the agreed Schedule of Works being completed subject to Stripe Consultancy Ltd advice prior to the release of the retention sum and prior to the Town Council being offered the car park. The Town Council has received a further report from Stripe Consultancy Ltd which is being considered, and the Town Council comments will be made available to Stroud District Council by 25th November 2025 for inclusion in the briefing pack for December's DCC.



Development Control Committee Schedule 02/12/2025

Kingswood Parish Council:

Although it is disappointing that the carpark size has been reduced, KPC is pleased that a solution has now been proposed that could result in this much need car park being able to open.

GCC Highways: No objection.

SDC Senior Contaminated Land Officer: No comment.

Public comments:

6 Support comments received:

- In an ideal world the original number of parking spaces would have been provided but given the time, current position and the need for town centre parking support the variation.
- Support getting the car park finished.
- The revision will soften the development and provide opportunity to enhance biodiversity. It will also improve the privacy for neighbouring residents.
- The amend layout of the parking spaces to the west of the tree is a big improvement
- The town undoubtedly need this car park.
- Risk the developer will lose patience and fail to undertake their outstanding responsibilities. The partially completed car park will then remain unsuitable and an eyesore. A loss to the community.

17 Object comments received:

- The affected spaces are the closest to the doctors and would have been invaluable for those using with mobility issues or are unwell.
- None of the circumstances reviewed and rejected in previous application have changed.
- The site must not be left unfinished and should be finished according to the original plan.
- This is back pedalling the decision now the house have been built.
- The developer knew the cost and process required with the car park clearly communicated requirement of this is scheme. The need for the parking is clearly evident in the town.
- The visual intrusion was always a concern and the parking was deemed to balance the impact of the houses.
- The only reason the house were built was because as carpark was needed. To erode the carpark provision is not appropriate.
- This is a problem of the developers making. Engineering solution is possible and the slope was known.
- The committee has to ensure that which was promised by the developer is actually delivered.



Development Control Committee Schedule 02/12/2025

- Another attempt by the developers to subvert the planning process. The developer should be held to that commitment.

1 Comment - neither supports or objects received:

Agree to the change of the area of parking to landscaping but feel it is important that this land is kept in the care or ownership of the Council to ensure its upgrade is fully attractive and retained as a visual benefit. The unfinished and untidy state is evidence of the need for this.

A petition objecting to the variation has also been submitted. This has 330 signatures with 201 signed in person and the rest requested to be added electronically.

ANALYSIS

The primary element of this development relates to the provision of a town car park. Parking to support the town has been an issue in Wotton for many years and following extensive work, various working groups, Town Council reviews and various Wotton Community Plans this scheme sought to address the shortage of parking to help support town centre activities.

The provision of additional parking within the town would potentially provide some longer stay facilities allowing short stay closer to the town centre, allowing greater 'churn' of visitor/shoppers rather than single use. Coach parking was also another benefit to make it easier for visitor trips to support local businesses in the town with visitor numbers.

The Development Control Committee (DCC) assessed the merits of providing a public car park with the enabling housing back in 2018 and granted permission. This was difficult and challenging with differing opinions about the merits of the scheme and balancing these against the impacts. However, Members at the time considered the public benefits of providing the car park along with the 3 affordable housing units created a positive planning balance and approved the scheme.

Therefore, the principle of development has already been established by the previous original permission and work has progressed onsite to implement it. Therefore, the overall principle of whether a car park should have been approved is not open for debate during this application as the applicant can rely on the fallback position of the existing permission.

This variation does however seek to amend the layout of the car park. It removes a section of parking along the top of the bank from the approved scheme which would result in a loss of about 12 car parking spaces from the original scheme that sought to provide 80 car spaces and 2 coach spaces.

A previous application for a variation in the car park has been considered and refused by the Development Control Committee. This application is different and seeks to address the concerns raised.

The agent has provided further justification include a structural engineer report. The revised layout plan also seeks to provide additional spaces to go towards mitigation the lost spaces. The addition of the disabled spaces is an additional benefit. These have been located on the access road in a position as close as possible towards the nearby Doctors surgery.



Development Control Committee Schedule 02/12/2025

Provision within the car park boundary to allow the opportunity for a future pedestrian link to the swimming pool has also been added. Additional cycle parking has been provided within the car park with the revised plan providing 3 Sheffield cycle loops located towards the access road. The additional landscaping and safety barriers remain within the updated plans.

The agent outlines these as a more practical balance between the parking capacity, landscape and safety. Whilst the reduction does reduce the parking capacity, Officers consider a significant public benefit in the remaining main area of the car is still provided.

This application seeks to vary what has approval and therefore does require an assessment of the merits and harms to come to a planning balance. Are the merits of the varied scheme still sufficient to provide a positive planning balance?

The spaces being lost were originally added to reduce pressure on the Horse Chestnut tree within the site and avoid parking within the root protection zone and under the branches whilst still providing the maximum amount of parking. The Town Council have welcomed the engagement and highlight the importance of finishing the outstanding elements of the carpark.

The Town Council did support the previous application which sort to remove the spaces but suggested that the developer investigate other options for replacement spaces elsewhere in the main car park. Following the refusal of the previous application dialogue took place with the developer including Town Council input about the alternative layout options to maximise the parking provision within the constraints of the site and approved scheme. After a pause further engagement has led to the agent submitting the current revised plans. Whilst these still seek to remove the area of parking spaces on the bank they have responded to the input of the Town Council and provided an additional area of parking on the edge of the main car park.

Whilst the revisions do not full offset the number of spaces, Officers are satisfied that this is a realistic proposal and that further spaces cannot be fitted into the main carpark due to the constraints and need for space around the tree.

The section of parking proposed to be removed would extend out further than the pavement and would provide a greater opportunity for views towards the nearby neighbours who have raised concern about overlooking from the site. The removal of these spaces therefore does enable this element to be reduced.

The removal of these few spaces and the required supporting structures will be replaced by the sloping bank and meadow grassed area. Whilst it does reduce the number of spaces it does provide a softer edge to this part of the development. It is therefore considered that this would be an improvement in visual terms compared to the potential parked cars on this edge of the site.

The revised drawings also make provision within the boundary of the site an additional alternative pedestrian access point via the swimming pool. This is in addition to the provision should it be required in the further of the pedestrian access to the adjacent school.



Development Control Committee Schedule 02/12/2025

The parking bay widths and aisle sizes shown on the drawing do vary across the site and it has been highlighted that some of these do fall below the Institution of Structural Engineers guidance which recommends 2.6m x 5.0m with 6m aisle width to provide clearance and manoeuvrability given the increasing size of modern vehicles. This is only guidance and provides greater provision compared to the adopted parking space standard of 2.4m x 4.8m in the Stroud District Local Plan and also in GCC's Manual for Gloucestershire Streets.

The developer has previously offered engagement with the Town Council regarding the final lining layout which could be taken up to address any concerns. Vehicle speeds will be low and the car park areas will be shared between vehicles and pedestrians but pedestrian circulation can also be addressed within the lining and could provide a defined pedestrian route. It also has to be noted that the approved built area of the car park is constrained and given the current stage of development it is not possible for large revisions without significant alterations which are unlikely to be proposed.

It is acknowledged there is mixed opinions within the local community about the principle of the car park and also about the reduction in parking capacity. Planning permission has already been granted for the car park and whilst concerns about the scheme are appreciated the proposal does have to be considered in the context of the approved scheme. The delay in finishing the development and the implications of that including for example the risk of raised ironwork is also appreciated. Whilst the responsibility and risk for the site and current condition remains with the developer, this variation does seek to progress to a conclusion of the construction phase. In meeting with the developer, he has confirmed his commitment to completing the project. A timeline for the outstanding elements has been requested to also include a final completion date. Engagement with the developer is on-going.

It is intended that the Town Council take on the car park. However, if this doesn't take place there remains the option for another organisation or a management company to operate the car park.

OBLIGATIONS

The existing requirements with the S106 the provision of the affordable housing and the management and trigger for the provision of car park and open spaces need to be revised and updated to reflect the current position, timeline for completion and variation proposed. An updated legal agreement/deed of variation will be required and has been discussed with the applicant.

EQUALITIES

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. The Local Plan seeks to address inequality and bring forward development that meets the needs of the district. With specific regard to the determination of this planning application, it would have a neutral impact on equality.

CRIME AND DISORDER

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on the Local Planning Authority to consider the crime and disorder implications of its activities and functions and take action



Development Control Committee Schedule 02/12/2025

to reasonably reduce issues of crime and disorder. The car park is overlooked by residential properties and along with an effective management regime and scope for lighting it is considered this development will have a neutral impact with regards to crime and disorder.

CONCLUSION AND PLANNING BALANCE

Whilst the reduction in parking capacity is a shame this updated variation does seek to address the previous comments and concerns and mitigates as far as possible the loss.

The removal of the parking bay and required retaining structure and replacing it with landscaping provides a soft edge and when compared to a row of park cars, provides a visual improvement to this section of the site when viewed from the wider area, above the allotments and also from the nearby residential properties.

Following dialogue, the addition of new parking spaces within the main carpark area have been proposed to provide specialist disabled spaces and to offset the lost spaces.

The provision of three affordable houses is still part of the scheme. These dwellings have been finished and sold as affordable houses. This benefit to the scheme is unaffected by this proposed variation and therefore remains a benefit within the planning balance.

There is a reduction in the total number of parking spaces which does reduce the overall benefit of the scheme. However, the improvement of this section of the scheme helps mitigate the impact of the proposal particularly on nearby residents and views towards this element.

The scheme still provides a town car park, including coach parking within the main area of the car park to meet the overall objective and still provides a significant public benefit to the local community. The scheme still provides a mix of housing including affordable houses on site.

Whilst the development is visible it is considered that the amended proposal will still provide a significant community benefit in helping to support the town centre which outweighs the limited mitigated local harm to the wider landscape character and this part of the AONB.

Therefore, given the current stage of the development it is considered that the specific circumstances of the proposal and the merits to the town can still be afforded significant weight as material considerations to justify, on a fine balance, a positive planning balance which outweigh the landscape impact.



Development Control Committee Schedule 02/12/2025

RECOMMENDATION

Therefore, it is recommended that committee **resolve to grant** Planning Permission subject to the planning conditions as set out in this report and the applicant entering into appropriate legal agreement.

Subject to the following conditions:	The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in all respects in strict accordance with the approved plans listed below: Site Location Plan of 10/10/2017 (S.17/2307/FUL) Revised Site Plan of 12/08/2019 (S.19/1722/VAR) Plan number = 7734/1 F Proposed Elevation drawings of 10/10/2017 (S.17/2307/FUL) Plan number = House type A 7734/10 Plan number = House type B 7734/3 Plan number = House type C 7734/4 Plan number = House type C1 7734/5 Plan number = House type D 7734/6 Proposed Section drawings of 10/10/2017 (S.17/2307/FUL) Plan number = 7734/9 Proposed Elevation drawings of 22/06/2018 (S.17/2307/FUL) Plan number = 7734/11 Revised car park layout drawing of 22/10/2025 (S.23/2101/VAR) Plan number = AL(90) 01 Rev E Revised Soft Landscaping drawing of 22/10/2025 (S.23/2101/VAR) Plan number = 18097.101 Rev G Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and in the interests of good planning. The materials to be used in the development shall be in accordance with the details approved by application S.19/1664/DISCON and retained in perpetuity unless otherwise approved by the Local Planning Authority. Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development, in accordance with Policies CP14 and HC1 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015.
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Development Control Committee Schedule 02/12/2025

3. The development hereby permitted shall be undertaken in strict compliance with the revised scheme of soft landscaping Drg No. 18097.101 Rev G received on 22/10/2025.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policies CP14 and ES7 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015.
4. The approved landscaping scheme shall be implemented so that planting can be carried out during the first available planting season but no later than Spring 2026 completion of the development. All planting shall be maintained for five years and any trees or plants removed, dying, being damaged or becoming diseased within that period shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species to those originally required to be planted unless otherwise approved by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policies CP14 and ES7 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015.
5. No external lighting shall be erected unless full details of its design, location, orientation and level of illuminance (in Lux) provided have first been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Such lighting shall be kept to the minimum necessary for the purposes of security and site safety and shall prevent upward and outward light radiation and have regard for the ecological implementations.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of local residents and the surrounding area and to minimise light pollution and adverse ecological effects in accordance with Policies CP14, ES3 and ES4 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015.
6. The Construction Method Statement approved by application S.19/1664/DISCON shall be adhered to throughout the construction period.

Reason: To protect the amenity of the locality, especially for people living and/or working nearby, and reduce the potential impact on the public highway in accordance with Policy ES3 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015.
7. The streets shall be maintained in accordance with the management and maintenance details approved by application S.19/1664/DISCON until such time as the road has been adopted by the local highway authority.



Development Control Committee Schedule 02/12/2025

Reason: To ensure that safe, suitable and secure access is achieved and maintained for all people that minimises the conflict between traffic and cyclists and pedestrians in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and to establish and maintain a strong sense of place to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit as required by paragraph 58 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies CP13 and CP14 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015.

8. The publicly accessible cycle parking located within the car park (3 no sheffield cycle stands) as shown on the revised car park layout (Drawing No. AL(90) 01 Rev E received on 22/10/2025) or an alternative scheme that has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, shall be provided upon first opening of the car park for public use.

Reason: To ensure that adequate cycle parking is provided, to promote cycle use and to ensure that the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up in accordance with Paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies CP13, CP14, ES3 and EI12 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015.

9. The dwellings hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the vehicular parking including any garages and turning facilities have been provided in accordance with the submitted Revised Site Plan drg no. 7734/1 F received on 12/08/2019, and those facilities shall be maintained available for those purposes thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that a safe, suitable and secure means of access for all people that minimises the conflict between traffic and cyclists and pedestrians is provided in accordance with the Paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies CP13, ES3 and EI12 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015.

10. The preferred pedestrian route signage shall be provided in accordance with the signage scheme approved by application S.22/1364/DISCON prior to the opening of the car park to public use.

Reason: To ensure priority is given to pedestrian and cycle movements in accordance with section 4 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies CP13, CP14, ES3 and EI12 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015.



Development Control Committee Schedule 02/12/2025

11. Prior to the opening of the car park to public use, a scheme for the hours of opening shall first be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include the hours of opening and details of the control mechanism. The car park shall then be operated in accordance with the approved details thereafter unless an alternative scheme has been approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the amenity of the locality, especially for people living nearby in accordance with Policy ES3 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015.

12. The development hereby approved shall adhere to and be carried out in strict accordance with the approved Ecological Appraisal, by AD Ecology, dated June 2016 and the Reptile Survey, by AD Ecology, dated July 2017.

Reason: To ensure the protection of biodiversity in accordance with paragraph 118 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy ES6 of the Stroud District Local Plan 2015 and NERC Act 2006.

13. The ecological mitigation and enhancements contained with the ecological design strategy (EDS) approved by application S.19/1664/DISCON shall be implemented and maintained in accordance with approved details.

Reason: To protect and enhance the site for biodiversity in accordance with paragraph 118 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy ES6 of the Stroud District Local Plan 2015 and in order for the Council to comply with Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

14. The scheme for the surface water drainage (SUDS) shall be carried out in accordance with the drainage plan SYMN/ICS/01/XX/DR/C/040/Rev T3 (which includes exceedance flows) and SYMN/ICS/01/XX/DR/C/045/Rev P2 before the development is first occupied and retained for the duration of the development.

Reason: To ensure the development is provided with a satisfactory means of drainage and thereby preventing the risk of flooding and minimise the risk of pollution in accordance with Policies CP14, ES3 and ES4 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015.



Development Control Committee Schedule 02/12/2025

15. The finish of the additional section of retaining wall adjacent to the disable parking spaces numbered 1 and 2 on the revised car park layout drawing ref: AL(90) 01 Rev received on 22/10/2025 shall be finished to match the already constructed bus parking bays.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policies CP14 and ES7 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015.

Informatives:

1. Article 35 Statement In dealing with the application we have worked with the applicant in a positive and pro-active manner and have implemented the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework in this regard.