



Called in Application P0672/25/OUT
Section 77 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

APPLICATION BY: Gladman Developments Ltd.

**Outline application for the erection of up to 180 residential dwellings
(including affordable housing) with public open space, landscaping
and vehicular access points (all matters reserved except for means of
access)**

AT: Land North Of Carisbrook Road, Mitcheldean, Gloucestershire .

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF

Mr Stephen Colegate

M.R.T.P.I, MPLAN, BA (HONS),

Principal Planning Officer,

PINS REFS: APP/P1615/V/26/3378822

COUNCIL REF: P0672/25/OUT

Executive Summary

This called-in application concerns a proposal for up to 180 dwellings on a prominent greenfield site north of Carisbrook Road, Mitcheldean. The Council's position is clear: notwithstanding the acknowledged benefits of housing delivery, the proposal conflicts fundamentally with the Development Plan and would result in significant and unacceptable environmental harm. For the reasons set out in this proof, planning permission should be refused.

The Council accepts that Mitcheldean is a sustainable settlement and that the proposal would deliver market and affordable housing at a time when the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. Those benefits are recognised and attract substantial positive weight. However, the existence of a housing land supply shortfall does not displace the statutory primacy of the Development Plan, nor does it justify development that would undermine the established spatial strategy and cause significant harm to the character of the countryside.

The site lies outside the settlement boundary and forms part of the open countryside. The proposal is not objectionable simply because it falls beyond the settlement boundary. Rather, it is objectionable because it would undermine the carefully considered and plan-led strategy for the growth of Mitcheldean established through the Core Strategy, Allocations Plan and Neighbourhood Development Plan. Those plans anticipated future growth being delivered through allocated sites, existing commitments and opportunities within the settlement boundary. This proposal would bypass that strategy and deliver an unplanned urban extension onto a prominent countryside site.

Although the site adjoins the settlement, the Council does not accept that it is physically well-related to the existing built form. The existing highway network creates a strong and defensible settlement edge. Beyond that edge, the character changes decisively from settlement to countryside. The appeal site is not a natural infill site nor a logical rounding-off of development. Instead, it forms part of the wider landscape setting of Mitcheldean and contributes significantly to the village's

distinctive bowl-shaped landform and rural character. The proposal would erode that distinction permanently and result in an incoherent expansion of the settlement into the open countryside.

Landscape and visual harm represent one of the principal objections to the scheme. The site occupies elevated and visually prominent land whose open and domed form contributes positively to the setting of Mitcheldean. Development would replace this defining landscape feature with a substantial suburban extension comprising housing, roads, lighting, engineered ground levels and associated infrastructure. The Council's landscape evidence demonstrates that significant adverse landscape and visual effects would arise and would remain even after mitigation planting had matured. The proposal would fundamentally alter both the character of the site and its contribution to the wider landscape setting of the settlement. The resulting harm is substantial and carries substantial weight against the proposal.

The proposal would also result in the irreversible loss of approximately 9.72 hectares of Grade 1 Best and Most Versatile agricultural land. There is no dispute that the entire site comprises Grade 1 land, representing the highest quality agricultural resource available. Evidence before the Inquiry demonstrates that such land is exceptionally scarce within the District and appears unique in the Mitcheldean area. Once lost to development, this resource cannot be replaced. The Framework is clear that where significant development of agricultural land is necessary, poorer quality land should be used where possible. In this case, the permanent loss of scarce Grade 1 land weighs heavily against the proposal and constitutes a significant environmental harm in its own right.

Whilst heritage harm is no longer pursued as a standalone reason for refusal, it remains an important consideration in the planning balance. The parties agree that the proposal would result in harm, albeit at the lowest end of the less than substantial harm spectrum, to the setting of the Grade I Church of St Michael and All Angels and the Mitcheldean Conservation Area. Even limited harm to heritage assets of such significance attracts considerable importance and weight. Accordingly, heritage harm remains a negative factor in the overall balance.

The Council has undertaken a full planning balance. It acknowledges the benefits arising from the delivery of market housing, affordable housing and associated economic activity. However, those benefits must be weighed against the substantial policy conflict, substantial landscape harm, substantial harm arising from the loss of Grade 1 agricultural land and the identified heritage impacts. The Council's assessment is that the principal harms attract substantial negative weight and collectively outweigh the benefits of the scheme.

Ultimately, this case is not simply about housing numbers. It is about whether unplanned development should be permitted on a prominent countryside site that performs an important role in defining the landscape setting of Mitcheldean, contrary to the planned pattern of growth established through the Development Plan. The Council's position is that it should not.

The proposal conflicts with the Development Plan when read as a whole, fails to represent sustainable development, and would cause significant and irreversible environmental harm. The identified benefits do not outweigh those harms. The Secretary of State is therefore respectfully invited to dismiss the application and refuse planning permission.