

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

14 July 2020
23 February 2022

Helen Garside
Principal Conservation Officer
Wiltshire Council Conservation (Central)

Officer's Name: David Cox
Officer's Title: Senior Planning Officer
Direct Line: 01225 716774

Application No: 20/03641/OUT
Outline application for up to 91 dwellings, landscaping, green infrastructure, associated drainage measures and vehicular access from the A363 as well as all associated works. Matters to be considered: Access into the site.
Land South of White Horse Business Park, Trowbridge, Wilts

Recommendations:

☐	No Comment
☐	Support
☐	Support subject to conditions (please set out below)
☐	Object (for reasons set out below)
☒	No objections

Revised proposals: the revised scheme, in so far as it impacts on the built historic environment, is very similar in scope to proposals commented on previously. Overall, the level of development has been slightly reduced and previous proposals for a care home omitted. My original comments are therefore repeated below and remain relevant.

The landscaped buffer between the development and the non-designated Woodmarsh Farm remains part of the scheme and whilst some level of remnant harm will result, the concentration of development in this zone at the north-west of the wider allocated site should assist in limiting potential impact from the wider allocation on the designated heritage assets further east. Taking into account that the site has been examined by an Inspector and allocated for development it is assumed that the low to moderate harm which will result to this non-designated heritage asset has been considered to be outweighed by the public benefits of the development as a whole.

As a result, I consider that the current proposals are in broad accordance with the requirements of conservation legislation, policy and guidance and I have no objection to a recommendation for approval provided that the mitigation measures suggested by the illustrative layout are achieved and subject to the usual requirements for good design.

Scope of comments: the following comments relate to the built historic environment.

Site: the site comprises an area of level agricultural land between North Bradley village and the White Horse Business Park, part of a site allocated in the Wiltshire Housing Sites Allocation DPD for 175 houses. Whilst the construction area is not included within a designated conservation area

and contains no major standing heritage, the wider area includes a series of farmsteads, both listed and non-designated, and the listed components of a Baptist burial ground (gate and overthrow and tombs).

The established character of the area is of a historic agricultural landscape currently accessed from North Bradley village via field entrances or a narrow single-track rural lane. Field boundaries within the site are largely unchanged from those shown on early C19 mapping and reflect piecemeal post medieval enclosure around a pattern of dispersed farmsteads. There is a sense of rural tranquillity across the site which belies its location on the edge of Trowbridge and adjacent to a major Business Park.

Proposal: the application seeks outline consent for the construction of up to 100 dwellings and a care home as well as vehicular access from the A363.

Policy: From the point of view of the historic environment the main statutory tests are set out within the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 66 requires that **special** regard be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

The Council's Core Strategy 'Core Policy 57: Ensuring high quality design and place shaping' requires a high standard of design in all new developments. Xiii advocates a masterplanning approach for major development sites in order that objectives such as 'i. enhancing local distinctiveness by responding to the value of the natural and historic environment' and 'iv. being sympathetic to and conserving historic buildings and historic landscapes' are met.

The Council's Core Strategy 'Core Policy 58: Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment' requires that designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved. It is required that distinctive elements of Wiltshire's historic environment, including non-designated heritage assets, which contribute to a sense of local character and identity will be conserved, and where possible enhanced.

The NPPF outlines government policy, including its policy in respect of the historic environment. Section 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development. Paragraphs 196 & 197 of the NPPF require a balanced approach with any harm which would be caused to either designated or non-designated heritage assets being weighed against the potential public benefits which might be achieved.

Supporting information: Paragraph 189 requires that applicants should describe the significance of heritage assets affected, including the contribution made by their setting. In this case, a Historic Environment Desk Based Assessment has been submitted to support the application. This is thorough in describing the wider site and its historic development and identifying the heritage assets which may potentially be affected by the development. It provides useful background historical information and a sound initial analysis of the special interest of the assets. It is agreed that it also provides a fair assessment of the contribution that the current site makes to the setting and significance of the assets identified.

Principle: the site comprises the northern section of a proposed site allocation for housing for 175 houses and the principle of some development is therefore established. CP57 requires a

masterplanning approach to major development sites to ensure that key objectives such as the need to respect the setting of heritage assets are taken into account and addressed. The Design and Access Statement gives an indication of the joint consideration by the respective developers for the northern and middle sections of the site which are intended to house the greater part of the proposed development. The proposed development areas shown on the masterplan layout are understood to be indicative.

Assessment: As part of the development of the Site Allocations DPD the Council commissioned a Heritage Impact Assessment, undertaken by Land Use Consultants, to provide a broad assessment of the issues which would be involved in the development of several of the proposed sites. I am generally in agreement with the risks and potential impacts identified in this report which is referenced within the Historic Environment Desk Based Assessment which accompanies the application.

In discussing potential options for sustainable development on this site the LUC report concludes that “As the designated assets are clustered in the eastern half of the site – and any development would difficult to accommodate without giving rise to harm – a more sustainable option may be to concentrate development at the western end of the site. Conserving the relationships between Kings Farmhouse, Willow Grove, Little Common Farm and the Baptist burial ground could reasonably be prioritised to secure both the settings of the assets and a representative section of the historic agricultural landscape that provides the context for North Bradley more generally.” The report notes that “While harm to the setting of Woodmarsh Farm (non-designated 19th century farmhouse) would likely occur, this may offer a lower level of policy conflict.”

The current site proposals are in broad accord with the findings of the report in that they comprise proposals to direct the greater part of the allocation on land towards the western side of the wider site. I agree with the report that there will a largely neutral impact on the designated assets to the east of the site. However, in line with the LUC report, the DBA identifies a level of harm to the non-designated Woodmarsh Farm which will result from the loss of its historic agricultural holding which provides the context within which it is experienced and understood. It is agreed with the report that the potential mitigation measures outlined in the illustrative layout, which include a landscaped buffer area, could limit the impact of the development to a degree.

Summary: Whilst some level of remnant harm will result, the concentration of development in this zone should assist in limiting potential impact from the wider allocation on the designated heritage assets further east. Taking into account that the site has been examined by an Inspector and allocated for development it is assumed that the low to moderate harm which will result to this non-designated heritage asset has been considered to be outweighed by the public benefits of the development as a whole.

As a result, I consider that the current proposals are in broad accordance with the requirements of conservation legislation, policy and guidance and I have no objection to a recommendation for approval provided that the mitigation measures suggested by the illustrative layout are achieved and subject to the usual requirements for good design.