RCC TOWN PLANNING CONSULTANCY



Site: Park View Farm, Webbs Lane, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 1PP

Proposal: Erection of storage building.

On behalf of: Mr N Grist

Date of Issue: June 2023

RCC TOWN PLANNING CONSULTANCY

PLANNING STATEMENT AND DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

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CONTENTS PAGE

Introduction	1.0
Background and Planning History	2.0
Context	3.0
Planning Policy	4.0
Planning Assessment	5.0
Conclusion	6.0

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicant to support their full planning application for the erection of a building for the storage of their car collection on land at Park View Farm, Webbs Lane, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 1PP.

1.2 As the proposal has a floorspace of 1125m², a Design and Access Statement is required. This statement comprises both the Planning Statement and the Design and Access Statement.

1.3 The statement will examine how the proposed development relates to the site and its context. The statement will also provide an explanation and justification for the scheme having regard to the national and local plan policy context.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND PLANNING HISTORY

2.1 The applicant, Mr Nigel Grist, has had a lifelong interest in vehicles and over the years has amassed a personal collection of over 50 vehicles. The restoration and maintenance of these vehicles is a hobby and passion for Nigel and he is now looking for somewhere to permanently house the collection. The collection is currently dispersed across a number of sites and the family would like to house them together for all generations to enjoy.

2.2 The area of land on which the vehicle storage building is proposed is situated between Nigel's home (Park View Farm Bungalow) and one of his business premises (Grist Vehicle Disposal and Car Parts Sales). It has historically been used as an area of open storage (for over 20 years) in association with the vehicle disposal site and the intention is to improve the appearance of the site alongside the erection of the building.

2.3 Park View Farm Bungalow is currently being extended and upgraded (works approved under 20/07569/FUL). A comprehensive landscaping scheme forms part of this approved development and extends along the full length of the southern boundary pertaining to the proposed storage building. It is therefore logical to construct the storage building on this area of land used as overspill storage space and the site will benefit from the approved landscaping scheme for that house.

2.4 Whilst there are more recent permissions relating to the works at Park Farm Bungalow, there is no history of any direct relevance at the application site.

3.0 CONTEXT

3.1 The planning application relates to a parcel of land on the south-western edge of Devizes, beyond the southern boundary of Avon Road. The site lies in an elevated position on the edge of the settlement, with the residential properties of Avon Road to the rear set even higher. To the immediate east is the vehicle reclamation yard and to the immediate west is Park View Farm Bungalow. To the south, the site fronts onto the former deer park, which is now in agricultural use. The land slopes in this southerly direction towards the Wessex Water Sewage Treatment Works (just over 100m from the site) and continues as such towards Whistley Road.



Figure 1: Aerial Photograph (source – GoogleEarth) showing the site in relation to Devizes (site denoted by red star)



Figure 2: Aerial Photograph (source – GoogleEarth) showing the site and its immediate context (site denoted by red star)

3.2 The site is not covered by any cultural, heritage or landscape designations and there are no footpaths within or close to the site. There are no public rights of way within the immediate vicinity of the site, but there are a number found in the wider landscape.

3.3 Within the wider context, Devizes Conservation Area lies to the far east of the site (circa. 0.5 miles) and there are a number of listed buildings within the vicinity. In particular, there are several Grade II Listed structures which lie within 500m of the site, the closest of which are Lyecroft, Prison Bridge and Bridge House Durleston, and the Grade I Listed Devizes Castle lies to the east of the site (approx. 800m away). However, these are all well separated from the site, both in terms of distance and intervening buildings, topography and landscaping.

3.4 The site itself comprises an overgrown storage yard which is accessed via a private driveway leading from Webbs Lane. It contains vehicles, plant/equipment, containers and various materials, much of which has been stored at the site for many years (20+ years). These are spread across the site which is also overgrown with brambles and other shrubs. It is evident that the site has evolved as a storage area, largely associated with the reclamation yard. There is a WWII brick/cast concrete pillbox in the north-western corner of the site. This is to be retained as part of the proposals.

3.5 Cypress trees form part of the site boundaries and are an alien landscaping feature in their own right. These are to be removed, alongside all of the open storage, to significantly improve visual amenity. The loss of these trees for screening purposes will be mitigated with the planting of a new native woodland belt. This woodland planting has already been secured as part of planning permission 20/07569/FUL and works pertaining to this consent are almost complete. To this end, the Council can be satisfied that the planting will take place. The extract overleaf is from the approved planting scheme contained within Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal and that formed part of planning permission 20/07569/FUL.



Figure 3: Approved landscaping scheme (source WH Landscape Consultancy Ltd – LVIA) in relation to the application sit (shaded red).



Figure 4: Access road to the southern boundary and Cypress trees to be removed and replaced with landscaping scheme



Figure 5: Photographs showing the range of items stored at the site and the overgrown nature of the shrubs and brambles.



Figure 6: View looking north towards the residential properties of Avon Road

3.6 The vehicle storage building would be positioned centrally between Park View Farm Bungalow and the reclamation yard. It would be largely clad in green profile sheeting with brick elements to the west elevation that would be the same as those used at Park View Farm Bungalow. From public viewpoints, it would therefore have the appearance of a modern agricultural barn. Although it has a generous footprint, this has been necessary to house the large vehicle collection. Moreover, the ridge and eaves heights have been kept purposely low to minimise the visual impact so that vast majority of the building will be screened. No external lighting is proposed.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

4.1 The main planning policy framework relevant to this proposal is the Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015 (WCS) and the Devizes Neighbourhood Plan. There are no specific policies in the NP relevant to this proposal.

4.2 Material considerations comprise the Government guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework July 2021 (NPPF) and the accompanying National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).

4.3 The tables below list the relevant policies and guidance for decision making.

WILTSHIRE CORE STRATEGY

Policy	Title
CP 12	Spatial Strategy for the Devizes Community Area
CP50	Biodiversity and Geodiversity
CP 51	Landscape
CP 57	Ensuring high quality design and place
CP58	Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Chapter	Title
12	Achieving well designed places
15	Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
16	Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

5.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

5.1 There are no policies within either the WCS or NP which specifically address or restrict the principle matter of the construction of a building for storage purposes within the open countryside. The main policy considerations, as listed in paragraph 4.3 of this statement, address the design, heritage, neighbour and wider landscape impact of all developments and are therefore relevant to the wider assessment of the scheme.

5.2 Policy 51 clarifies that development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character, while any negative impacts must be mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures. Policy 57 requires a good standard of design which relates to a strong sense of place with development being complimentary to the locality by relating positively to its landscape setting and existing pattern of development. Policy 58 states that development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment.

5.3 It must be emphasised that despite the building being in close proximity to the reclamation yard, the proposed building is only to be used to store the personal collection vintage vehicles owned by the applicant. Consent is not being sought for the commercial use of the building.

5.4 A similar proposal was permitted within the open countryside of Sells Green. Here planning permission 19/11809/FUL was approved for the erection of two storage buildings at Berhills Farm, to house the applicant's personal collection of vintage cars and tractors. In this case, the Council acknowledged that the building was not to be used for commercial purposes and therefore accepted the principle of the buildings in this location as they were acceptable in all other respects. The same line of reasoning and decision making can made here – i.e. this is a unique situation where there are no policies directly relevant to determining the principle matter, but the scheme is considered acceptable in all other development management respects and should therefore be approved.

5.5 This statement will now address the matters of visual and landscape impact, heritage impact, neighbour relationships and ecology.

Design and wider visual impact

5.6 Turning to matters of design and landscape impact, it is acknowledged that the building has a sizeable footprint. However, as will now be detailed, despite its size, the building would not in fact cause any planning harm. The building would nestle into its site with an extensive landscaped boundary to the south screening the vast majority of views. Those partial views would then be read against the backdrop of the rising landscape and the residential properties of

Avon Road. A similar conclusion was made for the extensions and alterations to Park Farm Bungalow to the immediate west. Here, despite a large number of objections to the scale of the works, the planning officer concluded that scale alone is not a reason for refusal when there is no material harm arising. An extract from the delegated report is copied below:

> A lot of concern has been raised over the proposed scale of the development which is considered to be a significant increase when compared to the existing bungalow. Notably, there will be an increase of overall height of the property by approximately 2.7m. That said, scale alone is not necessarily a reason to refuse a planning application if it is concluded that no planning harm would ultimately derive from it. In this case an increased in height of 2.7m is considered to be a reasonable amount in order to accommodate an additional storey. In addition, the site is sizeable and can accommodate further forms of extension without the appearance of overdevelopment. Futhermore, the increase to footprint will not be so significant when considering the extant planning permission that includes a large indoor swimming pool.

5.7 The site is a large, level, plateaued area that is well contained within its landscape context and is set against the established built edge of Devizes. It abuts development to its northern, eastern and southern aspects and, as such, it is not an isolated site where the introduction of built form would be seen as an anomaly. It can therefore readily accommodate the building without the appearance of a cramped or unduly prominent scheme.

5.8 The building has been purposely designed so as to be 'low-slung' with a ridge height of 6m and eaves heights of 3m and 4m. In addition, it would be largely clad in green profile sheeting so as to have a muted and unobtrusive colour palette to the exterior. The landscaping scheme approved as part of the works to Park Farm Bungalow will have a significant positive impact upon the screening of the site and the proposed structure. This approved planting scheme (as seen at figure 3 and expected to take place in autumn 2023/spring 2024) replicates the planting which defines the boundary of the old deer park and will contribute to the visual character of the historic setting of Devizes. It comprises structural planting of a mixed native hedge and native tree planting with a planted understorey. Many of the trees will be larger tree stock to create instant impact and structure. This landscaping will break up views of the development as well as help to contain and integrate the building within its context. The existing, poor quality and inappropriate conifers will be removed as part of the proposals.

5.9 In looking at views of the site, it should be noted that there is a high level of intervening vegetation across the former deer park, which helps to restrict intervisibility with the site. There are no fully open views of the site. Views of the building would therefore be filtered, long-distance and from the south when looking up towards the site and the urban edge of Devizes. Angled views from the rights of way network to the east and west would also only afford glimpsed, filtered views of the structure.

5.10 Consequently, the proposed storage building will not cause 'material' harm to the surrounding landscape character or appearance. This is largely because of the limited views available and because those views which do exist would be

long distance, filtered and read against the backdrop of the built form of Devizes and within the context of the sewage treatment works, Park Farm Bungalow and the reclamation yard. Despite its size, it cannot be reasonably concluded that the building would be unduly prominent or intrusive in the landscape. We therefore submit that the proposal would not cause demonstrable harm to visual amenities and complies with policies CP51 and CP57 of the core strategy.

Relationship with heritage assets

5.11 As described in Section 3.0 of this statement, there are a number of heritage assets within the wider vicinity of the site, including the Grade I listed Devizes Castle. The setting of these listed buildings and the conservation area will not be harmed due to the self-contained nature of the site and the distance between the storage building and the heritage assets. The application site is set amongst existing built form and would not be introducing an alien feature within the historic context.

5.12 The WWII Pillbox will remain in situ and will not be removed as part of the proposals.

Neighbour amenity

5.13 Having regard to residential amenity, the storage building would be well contained within its site and sat lower than the residential properties of Avon Road to the north. The rear elevations of the closest dwellings would all be at least 25m from the rear elevation of the storage building and positioned elevated above this. Consequently, there would be no issues of dominance, privacy or shadowing arising and the scheme is considered to comply with policy CP57.

Ecology

5.14 Malford Environmental Consulting was commissioned as part of the planning process to carry out an ecological assessment. The related report which accompanies this application sets out baseline information, and an appraisal of predicted impacts on protected/notable species associated with new development on this site. Any predicted/potential adverse impacts are addressed with proposals for mitigation/compensation, while opportunities for ecological enhancement are also identified.

5.15 The ecological report should be read alongside this planning statement.

5.16 In summary, it should be noted that no protected species or habitats were identified. The mitigation and enhancement measures are set out in section 6.0 of the statement and include requirements for protection of animals during construction and bat roost and bird nesting boxes. We therefore submit that the development can take place in accordance with CP50 of the WCS and chapter 15 of the NPPF.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 This statement has demonstrated how the proposed development not only conforms to planning policy at all tiers but also how it has been sensitively designed. As such, the proposed development both meets the requirements of the applicants whilst sensitively integrating the development into the surrounding landscape.

6.2 This statement has also shown how the site can easily accommodate the additional building whilst causing no harm to the character and visual quality of the rural environment. The proposed scheme therefore represents a form of development very much in keeping with the context of the area.

6.3 The Council is therefore requested to approve this application.