5th July 2023

Mr Alex Ross

Malmesbury
Wiltshire

Wiltshire Council (North)
Planning Services
Monkton Park
Chippenham
Wiltshire
SN15 1ER

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re PL/2023/04942 - Land Off Thompsons Hill, Sherston, Malmesbury, Wilts, SN16 0PZ - Permission in principle application for development of 1 self-built dwelling

I am writing to register my objections to the above application which lies opposite my property Hill House, Thompson Hill. This is an exact repeat of the previous application (PL/2022/03345), which had been refused in October last year. There has been absolutely no change to the site and policy circumstances, so this objection letter remains the same to my previous objection letter dated 8th September 2022.

The application is described as Permission in Principle, which I understand has to be determined in accordance with relevant policies in the development plan unless there are material considerations, such as those in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and national guidance, which indicate otherwise. I also understand that the scope of such applications are limited to location, land use and amount of development and I will therefore restrict my comments to these matters only.

In terms of its location, the site lies in the open countryside and within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Core Policies 1 and 2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) set out the settlement and delivery strategy for Wiltshire, and there is a general presumption against development outside the defined limits of the Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Large Villages (which Sherston is one). Whilst it is stated that some very modest development may be appropriate at Small Villages, Sherston does not fall within this category and in any case, this is not an infill plot.

Therefore, the application is contrary to policies CP1, CP2 and CP13 of the Core Strategy due to the site's location in the open countryside. Furthermore, Saved Policy H4 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 is relevant in the instance that the site is outside the settlement boundary. It states that new dwellings will be permitted provided that the dwelling is connected to an agricultural, forestry or other rural based enterprises, or it is a replacement dwelling. There is no evidence that the site

is one of the exceptions set out within Saved Policy H4. Therefore, the proposed development would not meet any of the exceptions where residential development in the countryside is permitted in the development plan.

There are also recent planning decisions in the immediate area that support this policy position. I refer to appeal APP/J3910/A/05/1179382 for the erection of a dwelling after demolition of existing outbuildings and stables which was made by the previous owners of my property Hill House, which was dismissed on 28th July 2006. Additionally, in 2020, we received planning for the conversion of our barn, under reference 20/00371/FUL, which sits adjacent and attached to our main house, with a condition that it "shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the main dwelling, known as Hill House Farm and it shall remain within the same planning unit as the main dwelling. This specifically excluded the development to be used as a separate dwelling due to the following reason: REASON: The additional accommodation is sited in a position where the Local Planning Authority, having regard to the reasonable standards of residential amenity, access, and planning policies pertaining to the area, would not permit a wholly separate dwelling.

Core Policy 60 and 61 also set out that the Council will help to reduce the need to travel by private car by planning developments in accessible locations. New Development should also be located and designed to reduce the need to travel particularly by private car, and to encourage the use of sustainable travel alternatives. On this basis I completely disagree with the premise made in the applicant's Planning Statement that this application would be in a sustainable location which would foster walking and cycling and public transport use. Conversely, the plot lies adjacent to the southern outskirts of the village with the vast majority of the village facilities located further north. I am therefore of the view that future occupants of the dwelling are likely to be heavily reliant on the use of a private motor vehicle for the vast majority of their day to day needs. The scheme does therefore not support the use of sustainable modes of transport as required by the Core Strategy and NPPF.

Indeed, the change of use of this land from agricultural to residential would actually serve to elongate the village limits further into the open countryside and AONB – thereby having a negative landscape impact. This would only serve to add to the ribbon development along this road resulting in unchecked sprawl into the open landscape, contrary to policy CP 51 of the Core Strategy and paragraph 176 of the NPPF. Consequently, the proposed development would have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the area, contrary to the aims and objectives of Policies CP51 and CP57 of the Core Strategy. These policies look to ensure development has a high standard of design, including positively relating to its landscape setting by protecting, conserving and where possible enhancing landscape character. The proposed development would also be contrary to the general aims of section 15 of the NPPF.

The application Planning Statement makes reference to the Council's current housing supply position, and the 'tilted balance'. However, to allow 1 dwelling on this site, in an area of open countryside, would run contrary to the policies of the development plan, which encourage new development to occur within accessible

locations and existing settlement boundaries of towns and villages in rural areas to achieve sustainable patterns of development and limit development outside of settlement boundaries. The application would therefore conflict with these intentions, which are generally consistent with the NPPF, and to which significant weight should be attached.

In terms of benefits, the application would make a contribution of one dwelling (self build). However, the shortfall in housing supply is small, the construction benefits would be short term and the proposal is only for a single dwelling, providing only a small uplift to the supply of housing and support to services in the village. These benefits therefore have only limited weight and when assessed against the policies in the MPPF taken as a whole, the adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. Consequently, as set out in paragraph 11(d)ii, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply in this case. The application would conflict with the development plan when considered as a whole and there are no material considerations, individually or cumulatively, worthy of sufficient weight that would indicate a decision other than in accordance with it.

For all of the above reasons this repeat application should again be refused, and the nature of the application for ‘Permission in Principle’ indicates the speculative nature of the proposals and demonstrates the lack of certainty of the applicant as well.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Alex Ross