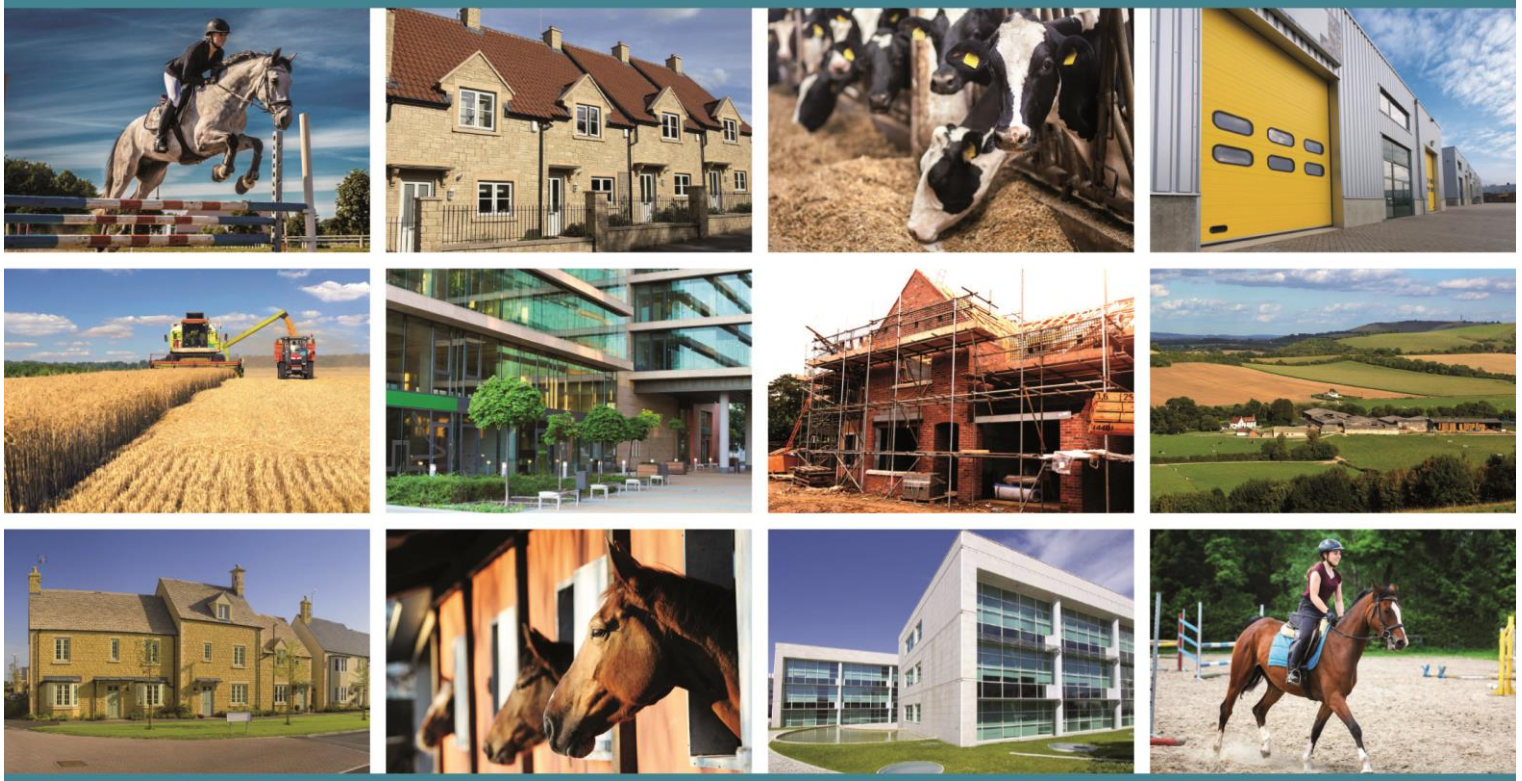
RCC TOWN PLANNING CONSULTANCY



Site: Land to the northeast of Higher Green Farm, Poulshot Road, Poulshot, SN10 1RW

Proposal: Erection of single storey dwelling

On behalf of: Mr and Mrs Curnow

Date of Issue: November 2023

RCC TOWN PLANNING CONSULTANCY

PLANNING STATEMENT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicants to support their revised full planning application for the erection of a single storey dwelling.

1.2 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 proposal is to make the best use of this area of garden within Poulshot, by erecting a modest single storey detached 3 bed dwelling. The applicants also wish to build a property that would be highly sustainable, including the use of integrated solar panels and an air source heat pump. Details of these are included as part of the submission. Vehicular access will be provided via the existing access serving the housing to the west of the site. The rear boundary of the new dwelling will be contiguous with the rear boundary of the approved farmyard housing scheme currently under construction to the north.

2.2 The site and the adjoining land to the north and west previously comprised part of the farmyard to Higher Green Farm. There have been a number of planning approvals relating to the former farmyard.

2.3 Planning permission was sought in September 2020 for the erection of a single storey dwelling on the application site (20/07733/FUL). This application was withdrawn.

2.4 To the west of the current site:

- K/56141/F: Planning permission was granted in 2007 for the rebuilding of two redundant farm buildings to provide four units of holiday accommodation.
- E/09/0481/FUL: Planning permission was granted in 2009 for the change of use of the buildings from holiday accommodation to residential institution (C2).
- 17/05347/FUL: Planning permission was granted 2017 for the change of use of the care accommodation units (C2), permitted by permission E/09/0481/FUL, to retirement accommodation for the over 60's (C3).
- 19/12154/VAR: Planning permission was granted in 2019 for the removal of condition 2 of 17/05347/FUL so that the occupancy of the units was no longer age restricted.

2.5 Immediately to the northwest and adjoining the application site, planning permission was granted in May 2015 for an in-depth development of 9 houses (K/59951/F). Work has commenced on the construction of these properties.

2.6 To the southeast of the application site on land adjacent to Higher Green Farm and fronting directly on to the village green, there have also been a couple of previous planning decisions for proposals. In October 1986, planning permission was refused for the proposed erection of two detached dwellings and double garages on a site to the east of Higher Green Farmhouse (86/0642/DP). Then in January 2013, planning permission was refused, and a subsequent appeal dismissed for a single dwelling and car barn on the site located to the east of Higher Green Farmhouse (E/2012/1368/FUL).

3.0 CONTEXT

3.1 This proposal relates to a parcel of land adjoining Higher Green Farm in Poulshot. The site is approximately 0.08 hectares.

3.2 The village of Poulshot is situated only a couple of miles to the south west of Devizes and is identified as a 'small village' under CP15 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS). It is a village with a dispersed settlement pattern, with pockets of more concentrated development, such as that which surrounds the application site. The site lies within the Poulshot conservation area, opposite the grade II listed Raven public house. Higher Green Farmhouse lies to the southwest of the site and is also a grade II listed building. Figure 1 below shows the context of the site.

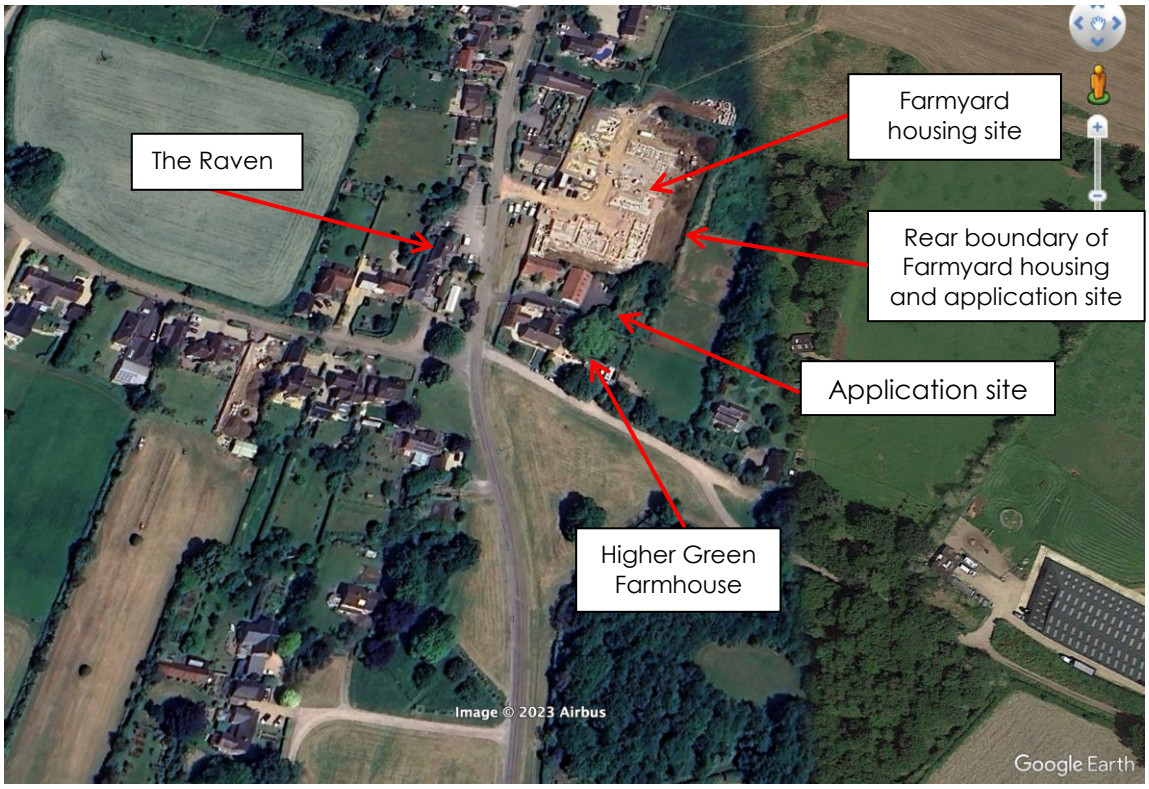


Figure 1 – Context of application site

3.3 The site is generally flat and used as a vegetable garden by the family living in Higher Green Farm. It is laid to grass with seating and some raised vegetable beds and a small shed (see figures 2 and 3 over). The application site does not include any of the paddock situated to the east.



Figure 2 – Application site (looking north)



Figure 3 – Application site (looking south)

3.4 To the north of the site, work is underway on the housing development approved in 2015. This is a mixed development with some smaller semi-detached properties situated towards the front of the site and several larger properties located towards the rear. Plot 7 abuts the current application site and the new house under construction can be seen in figure 2 above. There is one bungalow and several lower single storey elements included in the house designs, see illustration from the housing sales literature in figure 4 below. Figure 5 shows the close relationship between the application site and the new housing.



Figure 4 – Adjoining housing estate under construction



Figure 5 – Proximity of new housing development to application site

3.5 To the west of the application site there are further four single storey residential properties and gardens, see figure 6 and 7 below. These photos show the adjoining housing development currently under construction to the north and northeast.



Figure 5 – Housing adjoining application site



Figure 6 – Housing adjoining application site

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

4.1 The main planning policy framework relevant to this proposal is the Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015 (WCS) and the Government guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF).

4.2 At the local level, the WCS also contains a small number of 'saved policies' from the former Kennet Local Plan (KLP).

4.3 At the national level, the NPPF is the foremost material consideration. This is supplemented with the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

4.4 The relevant policies and guidance are set out in the tables below:

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Chapter	Title
2	Achieving sustainable development
5	Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
11	Making Effective Use of Land
12	Achieving well designed places
15	Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

WILTSHIRE CORE STRATEGY

Chapter	Title
CP1	Settlement Strategy
CP2	Delivery Strategy
CP15	Spatial Strategy for Melksham Community Area
CP51	Landscape
CP57	Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
CP58	Historic Environment
CP61	Transport and new development
CP64	Demand Management

5.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

5.1 The key planning issues relevant to this proposal are:

- The principle of the development
- Relationship with heritage assets,
- Design and visual impact,
- Parking and highway safety, and
- Residential amenity
- 5-Year Housing Land Supply and Planning balance

Principle of Development

5.2 The spatial vision and underlying principles for the delivery of residential development within Wiltshire are set out in polices CP1 and CP2 of the WCS. A settlement hierarchy (namely principal settlements, market towns, local service centres and large and small villages) is set out at CP1. The delivery strategy is set out in CP2, providing more detail of the scale of development to be permitted.

5.3 Policies CP1 and CP2 stipulate the scale of development that is acceptable, advising that development in small villages will be limited to infill within the existing built area, where it seeks to meet the housing needs of a settlement and when it respects the character and form of the existing settlement, does not elongate the village or impose development in a sensitive landscape area and where it will not consolidate existing sporadic loose knit development. Within the WCS small villages to do not have defined limits of development.

5.4 The site lies within the village of Poulshot, which is defined as a small village in the WCS and surrounded by residential development on three sides. Only the rear (east) boundary adjoins undeveloped paddocks, and this boundary line is a continuation of the boundary to the adjoining approved housing scheme as shown in figures 1 and 4 above. As a result, it is considered that the proposed scheme is an infill development within the built area of Poulshot.

5.5 Generally, this sprawling village has a dispersed development pattern with houses strung out around The Green and along the roads leading to it, but in some parts of the village, such as around the application site, buildings are located closer together, with elements of in-depth development and small estates. The existing development around the site is not considered to be sporadic or loose-knit. Indeed, the character of the area in which the site is located has changed significantly since building work commenced on the development of the site to the north as evidenced in the photographs in section 3 above and in figures 8 and 9 over. The erection of an additional modest dwelling on this site surrounded on three sides by housing would simply add to this existing character.



Figures 8 and 9 – Context of application site aerial photos taken 2021 and 2023

5.6 The application site benefits from a central position within the village and is within easy walking distance of the facilities it has to offer. As a result, the application site is considered to be a sustainable location.

5.7 Therefore, having regard to the location of the site, the size of the plot and the scale of the development, it is considered that the proposal is a sustainable form of development that would appear as an appropriate and natural addition to the village and should be viewed as infill development within the built-up area of Poulshot.

5.8 Paragraph 60, the NPPF emphasises one of the Government's key objectives of significantly boosting the supply of homes. Paragraph 69 recognises the important contribution small and medium sized sites, such this proposal, can make in contributing towards meeting the housing requirement of an area, and acknowledges the benefit that they can make as they are often built out relatively quickly. To this end, paragraph 69 goes on to state that local planning authorities should '*support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions – giving great weight to the benefits of using* suitable sites within existing settlements.' Section 11 of the NPPF requires planning policies and decisions to promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses.

5.9 In the context of an acknowledged need to deliver more houses in this area to meet the requirements of the Core Strategy, it is therefore concluded that in the matter of principle, it has been demonstrated that the proposed development of this site in a sustainable location, for one modest dwelling is clearly supported by policies of the WCS and the NPPF.

Relationship with Heritage Assets

5.10 The site lies within designated Poulshot Conservation Area, with a number of listed buildings and a non-designated heritage asset in the vicinity. As a result,

a key consideration will be any impact the development may have on heritage assets.

5.11 At a local level, policy CP58 requires that development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment, and should not have an unacceptable impact on the historic environment, particularly where this could be avoided or mitigated. The NPPF outlines government policy towards the historic environment. Section 16 "Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment" sets out the overall approach to heritage assets.

5.12 With regard to heritage assets, it states that applicants should provide a certain level of information concerning the significance of the heritage asset affected and the contribution of their setting to that significance. It goes on to state that, "*the level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance*". Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) has been prepared by Heritage Planning Services and forms part of the application submission. It is considered that the information within this statement and the HIA together with the details on the submitted drawings meets those requirements.

5.13 The HIA identifies and provides a detailed appraisal of the individual designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings in the vicinity of the application site. The preparation of the HIA early in the process has offered an opportunity to influence the design of the proposal and has allowed the opportunity to reassess the earlier heritage concerns in order that the historic environment is safeguarded. The HIA also includes an assessment of any possible effects of the proposed development on the settings of the heritage assets.

5.14 The HIA includes a comprehensive analysis of the conservation area and the role the application site plays within the conservation area. In terms of the impact of the proposal on the designated conservation area, it is accepted that change is inevitable, and the designation of a conservation area does not attempt to prevent change. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2 published by English Heritage acknowledges that most conservation areas have sites within them that can be beneficially developed. Changes within designated areas must be carefully thought through and be respectful of established character.

5.15 The HIA notes that:

"*Being secluded from all key viewpoints within the village, namely the Green, Poulshot Road and Hay Lane the Project Site does not occupy a prominent location and makes only a minor contribution to Poulshot Conservation Area*."

5.16 The site is visually very well contained by the existing housing on three sides and the surrounding mature vegetation. As the proposal is for a modest single storey structure, it will sit down well into the site and in similar manner to the existing housing to the west and as such it's development will not impact views to, from or across The Green.

5.17 Higher Green Farmhouse, the adjoining grade II listed dwelling is believed to originally have been a pair of timber framed cottages that were 'gentrified' by adding a tiled roof and brick elevations in the early 19th century. The building now has a formal appearance and occupies a prominent location with an open aspect overlooking the green.

5.18 The key significance of this heritage asset, in relation to this proposal, concerns the building's setting. The key elements of that setting are the relationship of the building to The Green and the converted former agricultural buildings immediately to the north. The land on which the proposed dwelling would be sited is set well back and is less significant to the setting of the listed building.



Figure 10 – View of Higher Green Farmhouse from the Green

5.19 The HIA also notes that the former historic setting of Higher Green Farmhouse, the adjoining grade II listed dwelling, has changed significantly and:

"The historic agricultural setting *is now characterised by modern residential development and no longer contributes significantly to the value of the designated asset*."

It goes on to note that the application site:

"*…does not form a part of key views to, from or across Higher Green Farmhouse and contributes little significance to the character and setting of the historic farm complex*."

5.20 There would be a considerable separation between the listed farmhouse and the proposed dwelling, with the existing dwellings and their carparking situated in between, and the farmhouse retaining space around it. The proposed

dwelling is a modest single storey structure, and as a result it is considered that the development would not have any significant impact on the setting of the listed building.

5.21 The HIA concludes that:

"The introduction of modern housing within the historic streetscene has contributed to a subtle change in the character of the village setting, north of the Green. The Proposed dwelling is considered to fit well within this movement towards allowing a modest number of well-designed new homes which respect the general pattern of development"

"Any harm to the setting and character of the Conservation Area and adjacent heritage assets is judged to be less than substantial, at the lower end of that scale and is considered acceptable in heritage terms."

5.22 It is therefore concluded that the proposed dwelling would sit comfortably in this locality and preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of the listed building. The proposal therefore accords with policy CP58 of the WCS and Part 16 of the NPPF.

5.23 A final note in this section in response to comments made by the Conservation Officer considering the previous withdrawn application. Reference was made to an earlier refusal and appeal decision. For clarification, this previous scheme is not comparable to the current proposal, nor does it relate to the same site. The previous application was for a substantial two and a half storey dwelling with accommodation forming a third floor in the roof, located on a site to the east of Higher Green Farmhouse facing directly on to the village green, see figure 11 below.

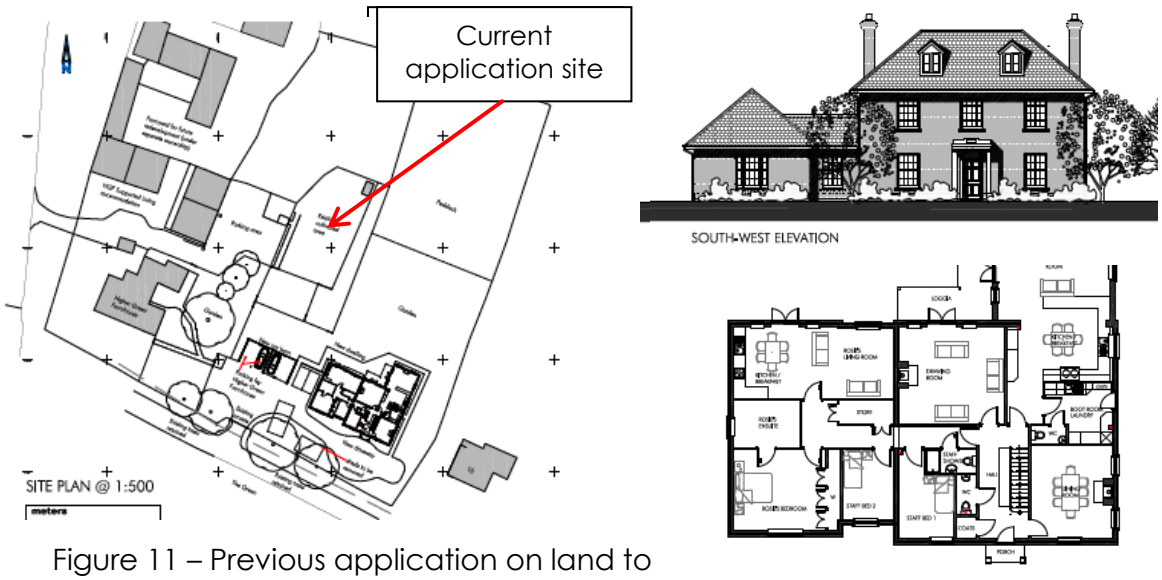


Figure 11 – Previous application on land to the east of Higher Green Farmhouse (E/2012/1368/FUL)

5.24 The appeal was dismissed as the inspector considered the size of the site was too large for an infill plot for a single dwelling and appeared to be virtually undeveloped countryside. He also considered that the bulk and mass of the building as well as the design would look out of scale and harmful in the context of the much more modest traditional buildings around it and as such would harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and to a more limited extent cause minor harm to the setting of the listed building.

5.25 Given the proposed location, bulk, scale, design and external appearance of this scheme, it is in no way comparable to the current submission.

Design and Visual Impact

5.26 The starting point for assessing the design of any scheme is the context in which it will be read. Policy CP57 of the WCS states that a high standard of design is required in all new developments, and proposals are expected to create a strong sense of place, drawing on local context and being complimentary to the locality. Policy CP51 seeks to protect, conserve and enhance Wiltshire's distinctive landscape character.

5.27 The development would be located in the middle of a number of existing properties and others currently under construction, set in a plot size consistent with the neighbouring dwellings and will be less prominent from the public domain than other development in this locality.

5.28 Having regard to the siting and layout, as detailed in Section 3 above, the site is well contained and visually incorporated within the existing built form of the settlement. The proposed siting of the new dwelling sits comfortably with the existing housing to the east, the new housing under construction to the north and Higher Green Farmhouse to the southwest. Furthermore, the modest scale of the proposed dwelling will be commensurate with both the site and the adjoining properties and benefit from sufficient garden space and its own private parking arrangements and the development would appear as a natural addition to the area.

5.29 In terms of the proposed scale, mass and proportions of the proposed dwelling, the scheme proposes the erection of a lightweight modest single storey 'L' shaped dwelling. The design incorporates narrow spans and a traditional roof pitch. As a result, it is considered that the scale and form of the proposed dwelling would fit with the other dwellings in the locality and would be entirely in keeping with this location.

5.30 Having regard to the elevational treatment, the submitted drawings propose a simple dwelling with a high quality slightly contemporary approach, similar to the adjoining single storey units to the west. The design incorporates a crisp pared back design to ensure that it reflects the nearby design styles and complements the historic environment of the village. In terms of materials, it is proposed to reflect the local vernacular, utilising a soft multi red brick and natural slates. The design incorporates rooflights to provide a greater degree of natural light to the living space.

5.31 It can therefore be concluded from this assessment that the proposed development would fit well with the varied character of the area in terms of plot size, building height, mass, scale and elevational treatment. The rural character of the locality will also be preserved. The development of dwelling on the application site will also make efficient use of land to deliver an appropriate development that relates effectively to the locality and wider character of the area. The scheme is therefore considered to comply with the relevant design criteria of policy CP57 of the WCS.

5.32 The development will also accord with Section 12 of the NPPF, which highlights the significance of good design to the principles of sustainability and paragraph 127, which requires that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

5.33 In considering the wider visual impact of the scheme, the additional dwelling will sit within a well-established built-up area. The dwelling will be seen amongst other dwellings, with a backdrop of existing buildings. The development is completely screened from longer-range views by existing buildings and mature trees and hedgerows. With this in mind, the development will not have any wider visual impacts and the requirements of CP51 are met.

Parking and Highway Safety

5.34 In considering highway matters, paragraph 111 of the NPPF is relevant advising the '*Development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe*'.

5.35 It is proposed that the new dwelling would be served via the well-established private access drive serving the residential units to the west. The access drive joins Poulshot Road, where there are wide grass verges providing good visibility in both directions.

5.36 The Highway Officer's comments on the adjoining site are relevant to this issue. In considering the proposal to change the use of the care accommodation units to retirement accommodation (17/05347/FUL), they recognised that the proposal would encourage a higher level of vehicle ownership but raised no concerns about the additional use of the access point.

5.37 The submitted scheme also proposes an on-site turning area and the provision of 2 parking spaces for the new dwelling. This provision meets the Council's adopted parking requirements and the requirements of CP64 of the WCS are thus met.

5.38 For the reason set out above, it is submitted that the proposal would not have a severe impact on the road network and instead that it includes and provides adequate parking and suitable access to the site and therefore refusal on these grounds cannot be warranted.

Residential Amenity

5.39 Policy CP57 (vii) requires development to have regard to the compatibility of adjoining buildings, the impact on amenities of existing occupants and ensuring appropriate levels of amenity are achievable.

5.40 In this case, it is considered that the siting and design of the proposed dwelling responds sensitively to the neighbouring properties.

5.41 The proposed single storey dwelling would be well separated from the neighbouring residential dwellings both in terms of distance and intervening car parking, walls, trees and hedging. As such the site is well contained, and the dwelling could be readily accommodated without causing demonstrable harm having regard to residential amenities.

5.42 On this basis it can be considered that the proposal will cause no harm to the amenity of the neighbouring properties and that the proposal satisfies the terms of criteria (vii) of policy CP57 of the WCS.

5-Year Housing Land Supply

5.43 A final matter for consideration is national planning policy contained within the NPPF which requires LPAs to identify a five-year supply of specific deliverable sites to meet housing needs, with an appropriate buffer. The 'Housing Land Supply Update' published in May 2023 confirms that the Council can only demonstrate 4.6 years of housing supply (based on April 2022 data).

5.44 In such circumstances the NPPF states that LP policies that seek to restrict the supply of housing should be considered to be out of date (paragraph 11 and footnote 7 to paragraph 11) and planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

5.45 Whilst it is noted that the application site lies within the Poulshot conservation area, paragraph 11(d) does not automatically stipulate that paragraph 11 is not engaged in such locations. Instead, it states that where relevant policies are considered out of date, permission will be granted unless:

I. *"the application of policies in the framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed;(our emphasis) or*

II. *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this framework taken as a whole."*

5.46 The '*presumption in favour of sustainable development*' is therefore a material consideration in the determining of this application and, having regard to the sustainable location of the site, it is considered that the planning balance weighs in favour of approving this application due to the lack of adverse impacts.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 This statement has set out a clear and substantiated case as to why the proposed dwelling in Poulshot conforms to local and national planning policy and advice. It represents a sustainable form of development and will help meet the current shortfall in dwellings.

6.2 This statement has demonstrated that the dwelling has been designed so as to reflect the character and appearance of development tin this locality. Likewise, it will not cause any demonstrable harm to the character or appearance of the area, the setting of the nearby listed buildings or highway safety.

6.3 No areas of harm have been identified that demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme.

6.4 As such the proposed development accords with primary legislation and complies with the National Planning Policy Framework and with the core policies of the WCS.

6.5 The Council is therefore requested to approve this application.