Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Officer's Name: Jonathan James
Officer's Title: Planning Officer

Application No: **PL/2023/09946**
Erection of single storey dwelling
Land to North East of Higher Green Farm, Poulshot Road, Poulshot, SN10 1RW

Please find following comments in respect of the above application(s).

Recommendations:

	No comment
	Support in principle subject to amendments to the scheme (as set out below)
	Support subject to conditions (as set out below)
X	Object (for reasons set out below)
	No objections

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

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. Sections 16 (LBC) and 66 (PP) require that **special regard** be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 also requires the Council to pay **special attention** to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of designated Conservation Areas.

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 201-3 of the NPPF require a balanced approach with any harm which would be caused being weighed against the potential public benefits which might be achieved. Paragraph 197 requires local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The Council's Core Strategy Policy CP58 'Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment' requires that "designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance." It is also 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 Council's Core Strategy CP 57: Ensuring high quality design requires a high quality of design in all new developments. Proposals are required to "demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through (amongst other things) "enhancing local distinctiveness by responding to the value of the natural and historic environment, relating positively to its landscape setting and the existing pattern of development" and "responding positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting."

Site and assets considered: the proposed dwelling would be located in an area of land located to the east of Higher Green Farm and to the west of no. 15 The Green. No. 15 The Green is noted as a significant unlisted building in the Poulshot Conservation Area Statement and it is considered worthy as a Non Designated Heritage Asset. Higher Green Farm itself is a Grade II Listed timber framed building that dates from the 17th century. It was faced and extended in red brick in the early 19th century. Despite it now having a concrete tiled roof, the building is believed to originally have been two timber framed thatched cottages that were 'gentrified' by adding a tile roof and brick elevations in the early 19th century. A significant 2 storey rear extension (the 'square-framed rear wing' mentioned in the list description) appears to have been added some 50 years or so later than the original framed buildings. It consists of two storeys with various casement windows, brick elevations, exposed timber framing and roughcasting – a mix of character and styles. To the rear of the farmhouse were previously farm buildings, now replaced by holiday lets (now full time dwellings) and an area of former redundant farmyard now the subject of a development of 9 dwellings (this development site was previously owned by Higher Green Farm). The site is located in an extremely prominent location within the Poulshot Conservation Area, facing The Green.

Proposal: the application proposes the construction of a new dwelling on former agricultural land which is now in use as a garden area.

Relevant planning history: 20/07733/FUL – Erection of single storey dwelling (withdrawn); E/2012/1368/FUL – Proposed new dwelling and car barn on land adjacent to existing dwelling (refused and appeal dismissed); K/59951/F – The erection of 9 houses, access and assosciated works (approved)

Issues: Impact on the setting of listed building, impact on the character and appearance of Poulshot conservation area.

Information considered/provided: Paragraph 194 requires that applicants describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. This should include sufficient information to provide a clear understanding of the significance of the heritage asset and its setting and the potential impact of any proposals on that significance. In this case, the application is accompanied by a "Heritage Impact Assessment" which provides sufficient information to understand the impact of the proposal and is proportionate to the scope. The requirements of the NPPF are therefore met in this respect.

Significance of assets and contribution of setting (as appropriate): The NPPF defines significance as the "value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be **archaeological**, **architectural**, **artistic** or **historic**. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting." Historic England assesses significance in a similar manner, referring to evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values of a place.

In this case the significance of the building lies largely with its historic fabric and architecture - its form, layout and architectural expression/detailing and use of high-quality design materials which have significant aesthetic and architectural interest and which contribute to the character of the conservation area. etc

The rear of the building has, however, been compromised by extension and alteration during the modern period and is of lesser interest.
The interior retains a good set of historic joinery
The circulation pattern remains largely unaltered

Assessment: The adopted Poulshot Conservation Area Statement is clear in setting out the significance of The Green and its associated landscape. Noted as being key features of the conservation area are:
- The extensive village green – one of the largest village greens in Wiltshire, with unmade tracks emphasising rural character.
- A range of buildings of architectural and historic interest from 17th century cottages to 19th century farmhouses and including the 17th century Raven Inn - all set within an open landscape.

Furthermore, it states that 'The essential character of Poulshot is of buildings in an open landscape with development at a low density. There are parts of the village where buildings are close together but this is not the dominant characteristic.'

This conflicts with the Heritage Impact Assessment which states that 'The historic agricultural setting is now characterised by modern residential development and no longer contributes to the value of the designated asset'. It also conflicts with the Planning Statement that considers that the proposed additional dwelling will sit within a well-established built-up area.

Both the Planning Statement and the Heritage Impact Statement make great play regarding the 'change' in character of the village setting with the introduction of a number of new homes in the locality. The nearby development site referenced by both statements for 9 new houses previously comprised of a series of modern farm buildings formerly belonging to Higher Green Farm.

Higher Green Farmhouse has been the subject of repeated consecutive development proposals which has reached the point where further development, would be at odds with the historic settlement pattern and with historic built forms and would detract significantly from its relationship with its surrounding agricultural landscape (CP58).

The proposed dwelling subject of this application would be of similar design to the former holiday lets to the rear of the farmhouse. These were justified as replacements to existing farm buildings. However, whilst the materials are superficially attractive and the yard layout reflects the former buildings, their wide spans, low pitched roofs and overall proportions are closer to those of modern bungalow development. The proliferation of this non-traditional form, which does not relate to any former yard layout and spilling into the open agricultural land which previously served the farm,

would be at odds with the historic pattern and form of development. The proposed dwelling would increase the level of development around The Green, in conflict with the historic pattern of development and CP57.

In regard to the comment made in the Heritage Impact Assessment that the application site would be obscured from view from The Green and therefore not impact the heritage assets, the photograph submitted is in full summer when trees are in full leaf. Addressing this issue, I wish to point out that there is a statutory requirement for proposals to preserve or enhance the conservation area and preserve or enhancing the listed building and its setting; this applies whether or not the proposal is in public view or not.

Summary & conclusion: The NPPF confirms that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). It makes clear that any harm to a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification.

The proposals would result in harm to the character of the conservation area and the setting of the adjacent listed building due to the development being at odds with the historic settlement pattern and historic built forms and would also detract significantly from its relationship with its surrounding agricultural landscape.

Whilst paragraph 202 allows that a level of harm may be offset by public benefits, which could include conservation benefits, in this case no objective justification has been provided for the works and the proposals are primarily for private benefit. As a result, the proposals fail to meet with the requirements of current conservation legislation, policy or guidance and I therefore recommend refusal.