Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Officer's Title: Planning Officer

Application No: **PL/2023/10599**
Erection of Stables
Apple Tree Cottage, Rivar Road, Shalbourne, Marlborough, SN8 3PU

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. 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 207-9 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 203 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 building is a Non Designated Heritage Asset located within Shalbourne Conservation Area. The host building is a one and a half storey thatched cottage of brick construction. The cottage is highlighted in the Shalbourne Conservation Area Statement as a 'significant unlisted building' and having 'significant verges/hedges' to the front boundary of the cottage.

Proposal: The proposal seeks to erect a two stables, tack room, feed store and store to the south of the cottage on agricultural land.

Relevant planning history:
PL/2023/06020 - Formation of swimming pool and erection of pool house (Approved)
PL/2023/04273 - Change of use of small portion of disused agricultural land into residential / garden to allow access to rear garden of Apple Tree Cottage for mowers / grass cutting equipment (Approved)
21/01789/FUL - Erection of a 2-bay garage with store and first floor office (Approved)
20/07052/FUL - Erection of single storey side extension, and erection of a 2-bay cartshed. Felling of 2 no. trees (Approved)
14/01680/FUL - Erection of garden shed in area of domestic garden (Approved)
13/06690/FUL - Change of use of agricultural land to domestic garden (Approved)
E/10/1619/FUL - Demolition of garage, erection of two storey rear extension (Approved)
E/10/1620/CAC - Demolition of Garage (Approved)
K/54892/F - Two storey extension to rear of property (Refused)
K/79/0212 19.04.1979 Vehicular Access (Approved)

Issues: impact on the setting of the NDHA, impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Information considered/provided: Paragraph 200 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 not accompanied by a "Heritage Statement" and as such it fails to provide any objective assessment of the impact of the proposals on the significance of the heritage assets and their setting and, as a result, it fails to meet the requirements of the NPPF.

However, paragraph 201 also provides for the local planning authority to make its own assessment of impact and the following heritage recommendations are offered on this basis.

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 NDHA building lies largely with its historic fabric and architecture - its form, 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. The significance of the heritage assets is also enhanced by the agricultural rural setting and the agricultural legacy and associations.

Assessment: The cottage and its plot has been the subject of numerous planning applications over recent years including a rear extension (doubling the size of the original cottage), garage with first floor office, formation of a swimming pool and pool house.

The proposed two stables, tack room, feed store and store would be located on an open field to the south of the cottage on agricultural land. The structure would have an L shaped form with a pitched roof and covered projecting canopy over the entrance doors at the rear. This would have a footprint similar in size to the original cottage. The structure would be set back behind the building line of the cottage to match that of the approved pool house building. To the rear of the stable facing the road would be planted a new beech hedge; a new beech hedge would also be planted either side of the 'plot', thereby subdividing the existing open field. The area to the rear of the stables between the hedge and the road has not been demarcated for a use, however a hedge is not shown on the front boundary of the site and this appears potentially as either parking or a storage area for a house box associated with the proposed stable use.

The applicant recently obtained planning permission for the change of use of a 7m strip of the agricultural land agricultural land into residential / garden to allow access to rear garden of Apple Tree Cottage for mowers / grass cutting equipment. This strip of land has been consumed into the proposed stable use. However this current planning application has not been accompanied by a Change of Use application for the field land and it is unclear whether paddock use is sought or just for agricultural grazing.

In conservation terms, I am concerned with the creeping form of development within the setting of this NDHA and the conservation area. The cottage was once a subservient building form and now will be surrounded by extensions and buildings on three sides. The proposed stable would continue this creeping form of development around the building and would push out domestic related buildings into the open countryside and rural setting of the heritage assets. This I consider would be harmful to the significance of the heritage assets and would detract from their rural setting.

I am also mindful of the type of paraphernalia that is often associated with stables and horse culture, such a horse lorries, horse boxes, jumps etc which would also have an impact on the AONB and the open countryside which defines the edge of the village at this point and would create visual intrusion.

I would also be concerned at the likely pressure for future additional storage buildings to support the stable use, e.g. barn for storage of winter feed and hay, since this is likely to be required over and above what has been applied for with this application.

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.

As the NPPF states, heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and it is important to conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. The setting of heritage assets is acknowledged to be part of their significance, and in this case the open agricultural landscape quality is part of this heritage asset's significance. Whilst a number of extensions and structures have been approved on the residential plot of the NDHA, the principle of domestic development spilling out into the open surrounding agricultural land is in no way justifies the harm to the setting of the heritage assets.

Whilst paragraph 208 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 articulated as being primarily for the convenience of the occupants i.e. a 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.