CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/07186
Site Address:	Land to the north of Oaklands, Clarendon Road, Alderbury, SP5 3AX
Date site notice posted:	N/A
Consultation Expiry:	30/01/24

POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework
Section 2 Achieving Sustainable Development
Section 12 Achieving Well Designed Places
Section 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Wiltshire Core Strategy
Core Policy 1 Settlement Strategy
Core Policy 2 Delivery Strategy
Core Policy 23 Southern Wiltshire Community Area
Core Policy 51 Landscaping
Core Policy 57 Ensuring high quality design and place shaping
Core Policy 60 Sustainable Transport
Core Policy 61 Transport and Development

Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan

Appendix A: South Wiltshire HMA Amended Settlement Boundaries (adopted Feb 2020)

Saved Salisbury District Local Plan
C6 Special Landscape Area

Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2015-2026:
Car Parking Strategy

Emerging Local Plan

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

N/A

ISSUES

- Principle of development including design and scale;
- Amenity impacts;
- Parking/Highway Safety;
- Ecological impact including River Test nitrate neutrality and New Forest SPA

REPRESENTATIONS

Alderbury Parish Council – No objection

WC Highways – Objection with comments received stating:

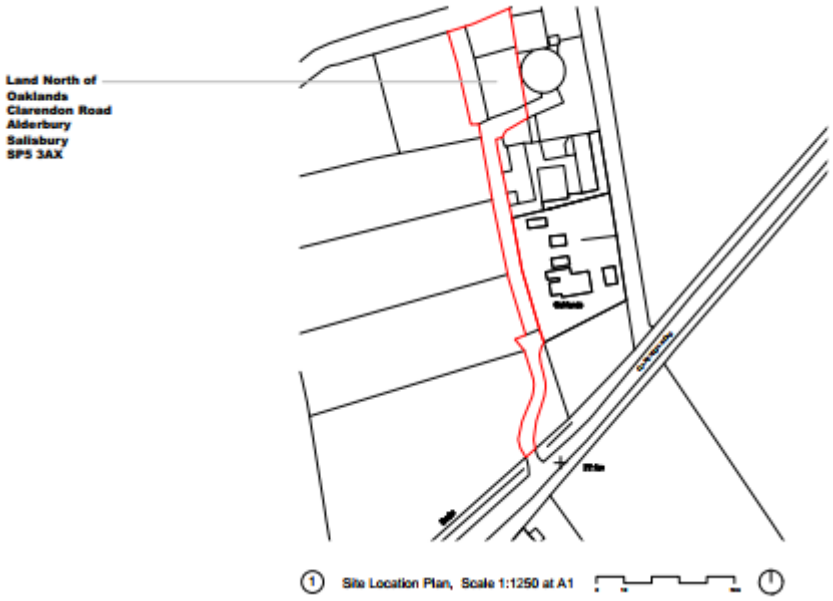
The proposal is for a log cabin to be located on the existing 'Oaklands' site served by Clarendon Road. Clarendon Road runs north from Alderbury and crosses over the A36. Beyond the A36 the speed limit on Clarendon Road is derestricted and the road becomes less residential and more rural in nature. There are no separate pedestrian facilities and no street lighting on this northern section of Clarendon Road. The nearest amenities such as primary school and shop are located in Alderbury over 2km away from the site. Having regard to the site's location in relation to the existing network, there is a greater likelihood that future occupiers of the development would rely on private motor vehicles to access the services and facilities required for day-to-day living. The proposal for unfettered residential use in this location is not supported by the Highway Authority as it is contrary to Core Policies 60 and 61 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Section 9, paras 108, 110, 114 & 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework Dec 2023, which aim to reduce the need to travel particularly by private car and encourage the use of sustainable transport alternative in order to promote a sustainable pattern of development. Should this planning application proceed to a positive outcome, the site should include parking for 3 vehicles in line with the Wiltshire Parking Strategy for a 4x bedroom dwelling.

WC Ecology – No comments received

Third Party Representations – None received

Site Description

The application site subject to this proposal is a parcel of agricultural land to the rear of the residential dwellinghouse known as Oaklands accessed via an existing access from Clarendon Road.



The site is located outside the defined settlement boundary of Alderbury and for the purposes of the local plan, is within the open countryside. The site is within Flood Zone 1 and is also located within the River Test Catchment. The development lies within the zone of influence for the New Forest protected sites which includes the New Forest SPA, New Forest SAC and New Forest Ramsar site.

Proposal

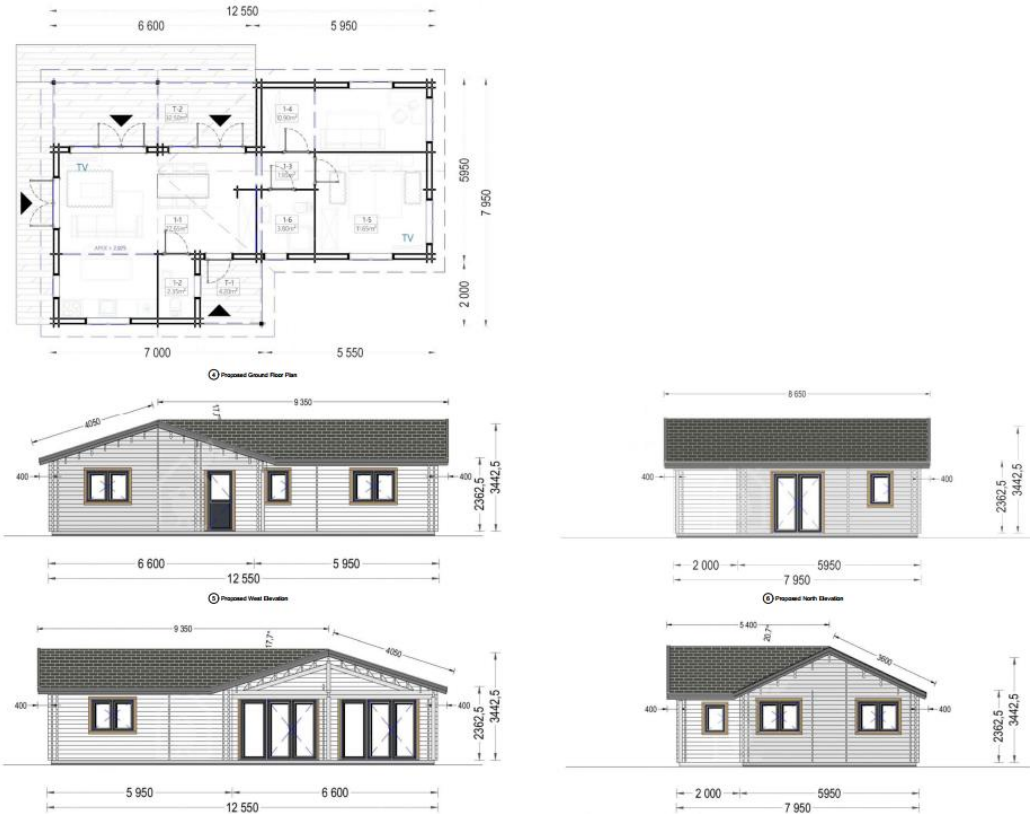
Planning permission is sought for the erection of a log cabin for residential use.

ASSESSMENT

Principle of development including design and scale

The proposal should aim to conform to the objectives of Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) which aims to achieve a high standard of design in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complimentary to the locality.

The design of the proposed dwelling house is shown below:



Core Policies CP1 and CP2 form the settlement strategy for the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS). In line with NPPF, this directs development towards the more sustainable settlements and locations, including housing development. The site subject of this planning application, denoted by the red arrow, lies outside the defined settlement boundary of Alderbury denoted by the black line, and therefore, for the purposes of the local plan, is within the open countryside. This is shown in the snippet of the settlement boundary map below:



The Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) sets out a Settlement Strategy and a Delivery Strategy for the sustainable delivery of new development within the County. Applying the normal principle that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise; proposed new development which does not comply with the Settlement and Delivery Strategies will be unsustainable, and so unacceptable as a matter of principle, in this overarching context. The WCS for the area was adopted by Wiltshire Council in January 2015.

Core Policies CP1 and CP2 form the settlement strategy for the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS). In line with NPPF, this directs development towards the more sustainable settlements and locations, including housing development. Core Policy CP1 of the WCS identifies the settlements where sustainable development will take place to improve the lives of all those who live and work in Wiltshire.

New homes will be developed in sustainable locations in conformity with the distribution set out within the policy, against which the land supply situation will be assessed. A more detailed distribution is set out in the Community Area Strategies. Development proposals should also be in general conformity with these. Sites for development in line with the Area Strategies will be identified through subsequent Site Allocations DPDs and by supporting communities to identify sites through neighbourhood planning.

Other than in circumstances as permitted by other policies within the Wiltshire Core Strategy, (as identified in paragraph 4.25 - summary below), new housing/residential development will not be permitted outside the limits of development, as defined on the policies maps. The limits of development may only be altered through the identification of sites for development through subsequent Site Allocations Development Plan Documents and neighbourhood plans.

Paragraph 4.25 exceptions criteria comprise:

- Additional employment land (Core Policy 34)
- Military establishments (Core Policy 37)
- Development related to tourism (Core Policies 39 and 40)
- Rural exception sites (Core Policy 44)
- Specialist accommodation provision (Core Policies 46 and 47)

- Supporting rural life (Core Policy 48)

From the limited information submitted with this planning application, it does not appear the proposal would conform with any of the policy requirements for considering the development of this site as a rural exceptions site.

In policy terms, and as a matter of principle, the proposal is unacceptable. The site lies outside the updated settlement boundary for the large village of Alderbury. In the absence of an allocation in the adopted Housing Sites DPD, the proposal conflicts with the sustainable development principles of the Settlement and Delivery Strategies of the WCS. Furthermore, the NPPF states that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The core strategy includes exceptions policies (as set out under Paragraph 4.25) under which development *may* be acceptable outside the settlement strategy – for example, dwellings for agricultural or forestry workers or sites which would deliver a high percentage of affordable units. Again, none of the exceptions policies appear to apply in this case.

The settlement boundary for Alderbury have been comprehensively reviewed through the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan, which was adopted in February 2020 and this said document has been afforded significant weight by recent appeal Inspectors.

Also of relevance is the status of the Council's Local Plan Review and the recent changes to NPPF guidance. As a result of these changes, the Council are now only required to provide a minimum of 4 years' worth of housing. The Council's current housing land supply position is 4.6 years. Therefore, from a strategic policy perspective, the proposal does not constitute sustainable development and would conflict with the principal aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Therefore, having regard for the above in terms of this application, the proposal comprises of unsustainable development and as such, is contrary to Core Policies CP1 and CP2 of the WCS and guidance within the NPPF given its location outside of the settlement boundary.

Amenity Impacts

The site is located within the open countryside. CP51 of the WCS requires development to protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character. It also requires proposals to demonstrate that landscape character is conserved and where possible enhanced through sensitive design, landscape mitigation and enhancement measures.

Saved Salisbury District Local Plan (SDLP) policy C6 constitutes a saved planning policy within Appendix D of the adopted WCS and is specific to the preservation of the land and control of development within rural areas so that the character of the Special Landscape Area is maintained. The supporting text of this policy states:

With the exception of the urban areas of Salisbury and Wilton and the Amesbury/ Bulford/ Durrington/Larkhill area, the remaining part of the District not included in the AONB is designated in the Structure Plan as a Special Landscape Area. The landscape in this area, whilst generally not of as such high quality as within the AONB, is considered worthy of being preserved. Therefore only development which is essential to the rural economy or desirable for the enjoyment of its amenities will be permitted, and the location, scale and nature of such development will be carefully controlled in order to conserve the character of the Special Landscape Area.

Officers note the location of the proposed dwellinghouse is set back to the north of the residential dwellinghouse known as Oaklands and is approximately 125 metres from Clarendon Road. The location of the site is predominately rural and given the scale of the proposed dwellinghouse, would not have any significant adverse impact on the character of the immediate area or to the wider Special Landscape Area.

Core Policy 57 requires that development should ensure the impact on the amenities of existing occupants is acceptable, and ensuring that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself, and the NPPF (paragraph 135f) states that planning decisions should 'create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.'

By way of the location of the proposed dwellinghouse to the north of Oaklands and its predominately rural location, officers consider that there would not any significant adverse harm in respect of overlooking or amenity impacts by way of this proposal. Furthermore, officers note the comments received from the Parish Council of 'no objection' to this proposal and that no third party representations have been received during the consultation period for this planning application.

Parking/Highway Safety

Core Policy CP60 (Sustainable Transport) of the WCS states: The Council will use its planning and transport powers to help reduce the need to travel particularly by private car and support and encourage the sustainable, safe and efficient movement of people and goods within and through Wiltshire.

Core Policy CP61 (Transport and New Development) of the WCS states: New development should be located and designed to reduce the need to travel particularly by private car, and to encourage the use of sustainable transport alternatives.

The Councils Highways Officer has assessed the proposal and has raised an objection to this on principle given that the location of the site outside the defined settlement boundary of Alderbury, would result in unfettered residential development in the open countryside and as such, any occupier(s) of the proposed dwelling would be reliant on a private car, contrary to Core Policies CP60 and CP61 of the WCS.

Based on these comments received from the Highways Officer, detailed in full within the consultee response section of this report, the Local Planning Authority has no option but to refuse this scheme based on the reasoning as outlined above.

Ecological impact including River Test nitrate neutrality and New Forest SPA

WCS policy CP50 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) and the NPPF requires the Local Planning Authority to ensure protection of important habitats and species in relation to development and seeks enhancement for the benefit of biodiversity through the planning system. Whilst the site is not adjacent to any rivers or in any respective flood zones, it is situated within the River Test Special Area of Conservation (SAC) catchment area. The SAC is designated for several species of wildlife that depend on pristine water quality that is typical of chalk rivers such as the Avon. It is part of a network of sites across Europe designated in order to protect these and other species vulnerable to man-induced habitat change. This SAC is particularly vulnerable to the effects of pollutants including phosphate and nitrogen which may enter the river for example at sewage treatment works or from fertilizers applied to farmland throughout the catchment.

The development lies within the zone of influence for the New Forest protected sites which includes the New Forest SPA, New Forest SAC and New Forest Ramsar site.

At the time of writing this report, no comments have been received from the Council's Ecology team to this proposal. However, it would appear that there has been no ecological appraisal undertaken of the site subject to this planning application nor consideration of the River Test SAC or of the New Forest SPA in which this site is located within.

Furthermore, Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires all development to demonstrate no net loss of biodiversity and for major applications the expectation is that development will deliver a net gain. It is evident that from a review of this application that no consideration of this issue has been provided within this submission.

CONCLUSION/PLANNING BALANCE

This application seeks planning permission for the erection of a log cabin for residential use.

Core Policies CP1 and CP2 form the settlement strategy for the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS). In line with NPPF, this directs development towards the more sustainable settlements and locations, including housing development. The site subject of this planning application lies outside of the defined settlement boundary of Alderbury, and therefore, for the purposes of the local plan, is within the open countryside.

The development site lies outside of the recently revised limits of development for Alderbury and therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in Core Policy 2 does not apply. Furthermore, it does not appear the proposal would conform with any of the policy requirements for considering the development of this site as a rural exceptions site as set out in paragraph 4.25 of the WCS.

Concerns to this proposal are also received from the Council's Highway's Officer in that any occupier(s) of this log cabin would rely on the use of a private car given the location of the site thus being contrary to Core Policies CP60 and CP61 of the WCS.

This application does not provide any nutrient calculation in regard to the River Test SAC nor does it provide any assessment or demonstration of no net loss to biodiversity. Therefore, having regard for the above in terms of this application, the proposal is contrary to Core Policies CP1 and CP2 of the WCS given its location outside of the settlement boundary and Core Policies CP50, CP60 and CP61 of the WCS. As such, planning permission should be refused for the development proposal.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse for the following reason(s):

1. The application site subject to this proposal is a parcel of agricultural land to the rear of the residential dwellinghouse known as Oaklands accessed via an existing access from Clarendon Road. The site lies outside the defined settlement boundary for Alderbury and therefore, for the purposes of the local plan is within the open countryside. The proposed development is considered contrary to the adopted Development Plan housing delivery strategy in that it involves a parcel of land designated as open countryside and; is outside of the defined settlement boundary for the Large Village of Alderbury thus resulting in unfettered residential development in

the open countryside where any occupier(s) of the proposal would be reliant on the use of a private car. Consequently, the proposal is contrary to Core Policies CP1 (Settlement Strategy), CP2 (Delivery Strategy), CP60 (Sustainable Transport) and CP61 (Transport and New Development) and the requirements of the NPPF.

2. The site is situated within the River Test catchment area that is a European site. Advice from Natural England indicates that every permission that results in a net increase in foul water entering the catchment could result in increased nutrients entering this European site causing further deterioration to it. The application does not include any detailed proposals to mitigate the impact of these increased nutrients and consequently, without such detailed proposals, the Council as a competent authority cannot conclude that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of this European Site as a result of the development. The proposal would therefore conflict with Wiltshire Core Strategy policy CP50 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) and paragraphs 181 and 186 of the National Planning Policy Framework.