Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Officer's Name: David Millinship
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Application No: **PL/2023/09911**
Proposed demolition of garage block & erection of new dwelling
Land Rear of 4 School Lane, Seend, SN12 6NJ

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)
	Object (for reasons set out below)
X	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 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 existing buildings on the site are modern garages. The structure is located on backland in Seend Conservation Area. The site neighbours two nearby listed buildings.

Proposal: The proposal is to demolish the existing garages and erect a new dwelling to the North-East of 4 School Road.

Relevant planning history: K/74/0093 – Extension to existing double garage (approved)

Issues: Impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings, impact on the 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 applications are accompanied by a "Design and Acess Statement" which provides sufficient information to understand the impact of the proposals and is proportionate to their scope. The requirements of the NPPF are therefore met in this respect.

However, paragraph 195 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: 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 site is limited due to its background position and verdant garden setting of the various plots facing the street. The garden setting contributes to the character of the conservation area.

Assessment: This is my second response and follows on from the submission of amended plans.

The existing garage building is of poor design and is constructed of materials that do not make a contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The new dwelling would be positioned where the existing garage block is currently positioned, so visually in terms of built form, there would be minimal change. The proposal would represent a reduction in built floor space, as the new building is less than that of the existing building being demolished.

In conservation terms the design of the one bed unit would be somewhat boxy and unimaginative. However this would represent an improvement on the functional aesthetic of the existing garage block. The building would however be single storey and modest and smaller than the existing footprint.

As such subject to materials, joinery details, conservation roof lights and landscaping the proposal is considered acceptable.

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 impact of the proposals on heritage assets will be neutral and the requirements of current conservation legislation, policy or guidance are considered to be met and there is therefore no objection to the approval of the application.