DELEGATED REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/11112
Application Type:	Full Planning Permission
Site Address:	1-36 PARK AVENUE, CORSHAM, SN13 0JT
Proposal:	Installation of external wall insulation to service family accommodation to improve thermal efficiency
Recommendation:	Planning Permission be GRANTED

PROPOSAL AND SITE DESCRIPTION

The application relates to 1- 36 Park Avenue Corsham. Th properties provide Ministry of Defence service family accommodation. The application seeks planning permission to apply external wall insulation (EWI) with a rendered finish. The application covers all 36 properties to the north and south of Park Avenue. The current properties have reconstituted stone façade, to be replaced with render.

The site is at the edge of Rudloe off Leafy Lane. The site falls wholly within the Cotswold National Landscape CNL (formerly Cotswold AONB) and the West Wiltshire Green Belt. PROW BOX107B runs parallel to the southern boundary.

POLICIES

Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015 (WCS)
Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy
Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy
Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and geodiversity
Core Policy 51: Landscape
Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping

Corsham Neighborhood Plan
Policy CNP HE1: Design

Cotswold National Landscape Management Plan 2023-2025

National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of Development
- Green Belt
- Scale and Design
- Landscape Impact (Cotswold National Landscape – formerly AONB)
- Residential Amenity
- Ecology

CONSULTATION

Box Parish Council: No objections

REPRESENTATIONS

Two representations received. Summarised below and available in full online

- Ask for confirmation of the extent of the proposal. (*Officer comment- Application has been amended to incorporate all the properties covered under the block plans).*
- Supports the application states that the proposal will provide financial benefit to residents and help in reducing pollution

One letter was received from the North Wiltshire Swifts. Extracts below – (Full comments online)

MOD specification has been produced which includes providing habitat for birds, bats and bees when renovations works are being undertaken,
Building dependent bird species are often found in MOD and Local Authority houses as they favour their method of construction which allows access to nooks and crannies under the eaves. So there is a high probability that priority species and/or legally protected species will live/roost in some of these houses.
We also ask the LA to remind the applicant that it is illegal to disturb nesting birds and for this reason we ask that an ecological survey just prior to the work being undertaken is conditioned. It makes sense to plan the work outside of the breeding season.

One additional comment received during the re-consultation of the amended application and supports the proposal.

No additional comments were received during the consultation period from the public site notice.

ASSESSMENT

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require that the determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Corsham Neighbourhood Plan are key material planning considerations. Local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations.

Principle of Development

Decisions on planning applications are made in accordance with the policies contained in the Wiltshire Core Strategy and government guidance.

The principle of minor external additions is considered to be acceptable in principle, as the development occurs within the curtilage of the existing residential properties. The detail of the proposals must also be considered against other policies within the development plan.

Green Belt

There is no relevant local development plan policy on Green Belt and as such the NPPF, Section 13 is the only policy consideration on this matter. The Government attached great importance to Green Belts and new development within the Green Belt is highly restricted by national planning policy. It sets out that development, except for specific exclusions at paragraphs 154 and 155 of the NPPF, is inappropriate. Furthermore, it states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful. It explains that development should not harm the defining characteristic of the Green Belt which is its openness.

The proposal is wholly within the Western Wiltshire Green Belt but is within the settlement of Rudloe. The external insulation and rendering would be an external alteration that in this instance would not see a noticeable increase in the scale of the existing buildings. As such the proposal is not considered to result in alterations which are disproportionate in relation to the existing buildings. As such the proposal involves alteration to a building as outlined under para 154 (c) to the NPPF. Accordingly, the proposal in its totality is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Scale and Design

WCS Core Policy 57 requires development to respond positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, elevational design, materials amongst other things. Sections 12 of the NPPF expects a good standard of design.

It is noted that render is not a material that is commonplace in the village, nor is brick (other than at the MOD estate). Dwellings are predominantly natural stone with contemporary development in recon stone.

The applicant has provided the LPA with samples in order that an appropriate finish can be selected. Of the samples provided the muted cream stone colours - *JUB Jubizol S (EPS) System. Colour: JUB NO1F - Peace 05 and Wetherby Building Systems (EPS) System. Colour: NCS 05 05-Y-30-R* are considered to blend adequately in relation to the predominant palette of stone/recon stone in the vicinity. A condition is suggested to ensure that these are the finishes applied unless a similar alternative is first agreed in writing by the LPA.

The proposal would improve the energy efficiency of the dwellings and would also result in an improvement to their existing external appearance. Subject to the appropriate render finish and colour being secured by condition the proposal will integrate effectively.

In terms of scale and design the proposal the proposal has complied with the requirements of CP57 of the WCS and CNP HE1 of the Corsham Neighbourhood Plan.

Landscape Impact (Cotswold National Landscape – formerly AONB)

The site is also with the Cotswold National Landscape, where Core Policy 51 indicates that proposals should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have an unacceptable impact upon landscape character within the immediate area and over long-distance views. Additionally, Core Policy 57 indicates that proposals should relate positively to its landscape setting by ensuring that important views into, within and out of the site are retained and enhanced.

Policies CE1 & CE3 of the Cotswold National Landscape Management Plan require that proposals that are likely to impact on, or create change in, the landscape of the Cotswolds National Landscape have regard to, be compatible with, and reinforce the landscape character and local distinctiveness of the location. Proposals that are likely to impact on, or create change in, the landscape of the Cotswolds National Landscape, should have regard to the scenic quality of the location and its setting and ensure that views – including those into and out of the National landscape – and visual amenity are conserved and enhanced.

The site is well enclosed by existing woodland at Leafy Land and Rudloe Hall. Properties along Beech Road extend away from the site to the west. As a result, the site does not appear prominent in wide landscape views. Views into the estate are likely to be visible from PROW BOX107B which runs parallel to the southern boundary.

The proposal will not see a perceivable increase in the scale of the properties or change in built form across the estate. It will however see a wholesale change to the external material finish to all 36 properties. As discussed above, the applicant has provided three options for render finish which have been considered. Of the proposed finishes, the LPA agrees that two of the proposed coloured renders (noted above) would blend adequately in relation to the predominant palette of stone/recon stone in the vicinity. These can be secured by condition.

Subject to the appropriate render finish and colour being secured by condition the proposal will integrate effectively It is not considered to have an unacceptable impact upon the quality or distinctive characteristics of the Cotswold National Landscape when taking into account the well enclosed nature of the site. The proposal has therefore complied with the requirements of CP51 of the WCS and the relevant policies of the Cotswold National Landscape Management Plan (CW1 & CE3).

Residential Amenity

Core Policy 57 states that development should have regard to the compatibility of adjoining buildings and uses, the impact on the amenities of existing occupants and ensuring that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself. Section 12 of the NPPF also states that planning decisions should create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

The proposal relates to upgrading the exterior of the existing dwellings only. There is to be no change to the form of the buildings or fenestration arrangements. As such there are no concerns in relation loss of privacy, light or overbearing development. The proposal does not give rise to concerns in respect of residential amenity and therefore complies with CP57 of the WCS.

Should the developer require access to the neighbour's land to carry out any work, for example, to erect scaffolding they will need to obtain consent from any relevant landowners.

Ecology

Core Policy 50 of the WCS Development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale. Section 15 of the NPPF requires that the planning authority ensures protection of important habitats and species in relation to development and seeks enhancement for the benefit of biodiversity through the planning system.

The site is not located within any designated sites however it is located within buffer zones associated with the Bath & Bradford on Avon Bat SAC. In general, development can result in potential for impacts on species using the different habitats during construction and operation from physical disturbance, habitat destruction, noise and lighting.

In this case, the proposal does not involve the removal of trees, hedgerow or vegetation, nor does it include any new external lighting. It is therefore not considered that the proposals have the potential to trigger impacts upon sensitive features which are connected to the SAC.

The North Wiltshire Swifts have made comments in relation to the proposal raising concern that the application does not include any documentation to establish whether any building dependent species such as swifts, house sparrows and legally protected bats are using the eaves/roofs of the houses as their habitat/roost. The also add that building dependent bird species are often found in MOD and Local Authority houses so there is a high probability that priority species and/or legally protected species will live/roost in some of these properties. The groups requests that a condition secures ecological surveys prior to work being undertaken.

For a development of this scale and nature the LPA does not require an ecological survey to be carried out in order to consider the application. It is acknowledged that protected species and other wildlife may still be present and so the applicant can be reminded of the legal protection afforded to wildlife and their responsibilities under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and Habitats regulations via an informative.

CONCLUSION

The proposal is considered to be acceptable in respect of size, scale, and design. The development is not considered to impact unacceptably upon the character of the area, wider landscape and is not considered to have an unacceptable impact upon the amenity or living conditions of the adjoining occupiers. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Core Policy 50, 51 and 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and relevant sections of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), the Corsham Neighbourhood Plan and the Cotswold National Landscape Management Plan.

RECOMMENDATION: That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

See decision notice