

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

16 July 2024

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Officer's Title: Planning Officer

Application No: PL/2025/ /05845
Erection of one self-build dwelling and associated works
Land at Manor Farm, Main Street, Keevil, Trowbridge, BA14 6LU

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)
☐	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 66 requires 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.

National Planning Practice Guidance provides guidance on interpreting the NPPF.

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."

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."

Historic England Advice Note 2 – Making changes to Heritage Assets illustrates the application of policies set out in the NPPF in determining applications for PP and LBC.

Site and assets considered: The application site is agricultural land associated with Manor Farm.

Proposal: The proposal seeks the erection of a detached self-build dwelling and associated works on land at Manor Farm.

Relevant planning history: None

Issues: impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings, impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Information considered/provided: Paragraph 200 of the NPPF 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 & Access Statement and Heritage 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 201 of the NPPF 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 lies with its agricultural setting which forms part of the rural landscape of the historic farmstead on the edge of village location.

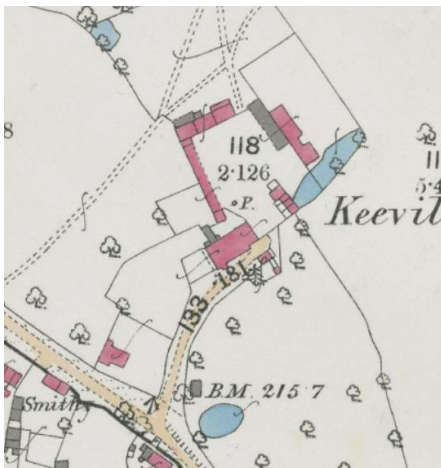
Assessment: The site is agricultural land associated with Manor Farm, which is a historic farmstead on the edge of Keevil village. The site forms part of the setting of a number of listed

buildings – Manor Farmhouse, barn at Manor Farm, and & Main Street, which are all Grade II listed.

The proposal seeks the erection of a detached self-build dwelling and associated works on land at Manor Farm. It is intended that the proposed house would be a self-build dwelling.

The land is rising gently towards the rear (north) of the site. It is currently used as an area of agricultural pasture associated with Manor Farm and laid to rough grass with a large horse chestnut tree towards the front of the site. There is a natural stone wall and grass verge running along the site frontage. The site occupies a fairly prominent position in the street scene and in the conservation area.

Manor Farm has always been an isolated farm on the edge of Keevil village, as shown in the First Edition OS Map below. The farmstead largely maintains its original form today albeit with a number of modern farm buildings being added. The site proposed for the new self-build dwelling has never had development and has always been open agricultural land. This established and historic relationship of the historic farmstead with the agricultural landscaping is a key part of its significance.



The site forms part of the agricultural setting of the historic farmstead and does not form part of the linear settlement of Keevil.

Any development on this prominent frontage would detract from the historic core of the farmstead and would not integrate with the main linear form of the settlement.

As such any development proposal would detract from the agricultural setting of the listed buildings and the isolated farmstead which is part of the character and appearance of the conservation area.

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 proposal will result in harm to the setting of the listed buildings and character and appearance of the conservation area via impact of the proposed development on the agricultural setting of the

historic isolated farmstead. The proposals could be considered as causing 'less than substantial harm' for the purposes of interpreting the NPPF, but they involve the erosion of the setting of the neighbouring listed buildings and the character and appearance of the conservation area, and as such should not be seen as being of lesser consequence. Indeed, the wording of the NPPF, and the 'special regard' by Section 66 and 'special attention' by Section 72 of the Act requires that any level harm caused should be taken seriously.

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.