

Planning Reference: PL/2025/05178

MANOR FARM, 17 THE STREET, CHIRTON, SN10 3QS

Consultation from 20 June to 21 July 2025

Planning Officer: Mr J. Leesam

Dear Mr Leesam

Thank you for notifying us of the proposal for a car port and plant/store with installation of two air source heat pumps (ASHP's), adjacent to our property, Iris Cottage, 15 The Street, Chirton. This Planning Application is a revision for a 'cart shed' on the same site following a Notice of Refusal by Wiltshire Council (PL/2024/05971).

We **OBJECT** to this application. Iris Cottage is the primary residence affected by the plans (*fig.1*). Our main reasons for objection relate to the impact on our cottage, specifically the location, size and scale of the proposed car port and the siting of the two ASHP's (already installed).

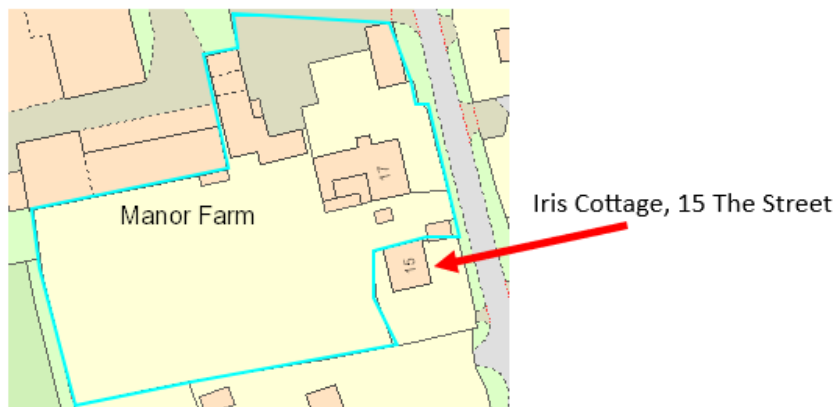


Figure 1 – Iris Cottage plot in relation to Manor Farm

Iris Cottage

- Early-mid 1800's Victorian cottage within a village setting
- Solid 9" brick wall, 10 - 20mm render, no cavity, thermal or noise insulation
- Shallow brick foundation onto earth and stone - only 12-16" below ground level
- Iris Cottage is a small corner of the overall area, historically part of Manor Farm

Planning Documents Submitted

There are several discrepancies and inaccuracies noted within the planning documents, some of which are outlined below:-

1. The boundary drawn on the Block Plan is incorrect. *Fig.2* illustrates the correct boundary as recorded on our Title Deeds. The distances to / from the boundary should be measured from the edge of our gully, not from the wall of Iris Cottage. The gully is attached to and forms part of the main structure of our property, is clearly outlined on the Land Registry Title Deeds (*fig.3*) and forms the outer edge of the boundary of Iris Cottage; **it is not part of Manor Farm**. This boundary can also be evidenced in previous planning applications relating to Manor Farm which pre-date the current owner.

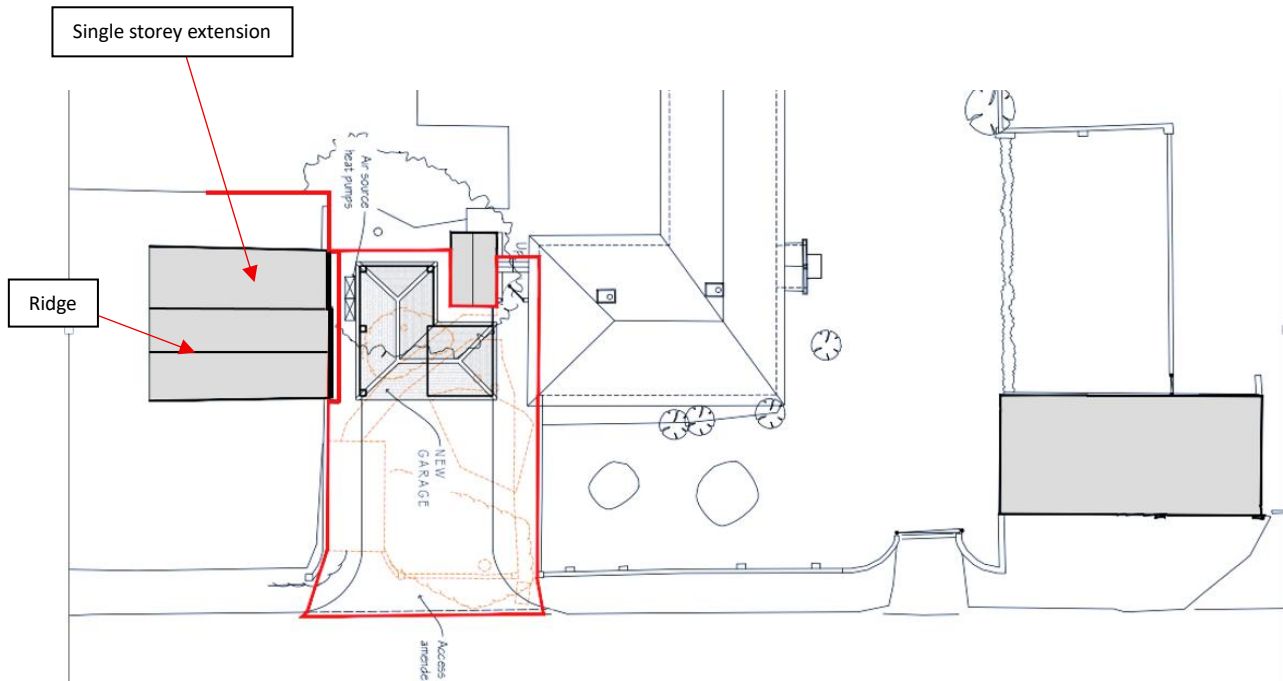


Figure 2 – Block Plan with gulley correctly identified in line with Title Deeds

2. Fig.3 shows the Land Registry Title Deed which clearly notes a deviation in our northern boundary to include the gulley as part of the cottage structure, together with our front boundary wall which joins to and projects from the east elevation of our cottage.

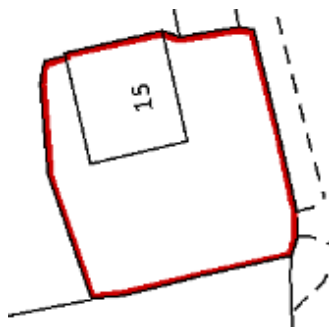


Figure 3 – Land Registry Title Deeds

3. Two single ASHP units are proposed. In fact, **two, double fan units have been installed already (four fans), not two smaller single fan units as per submission.**
4. The Block Plan notes the ASHP's were added to the design 19th June 2025, but fig.4 below is a photo dated 5th April, so the exact size of the units would have been known when the plans were updated - the size and output have been misrepresented - the drawings are misleading.
5. Despite a substantial amount of ground works, etc. having been completed on site, there is no explanation or reference within the documents that some aspects of the application should be regarded as retrospective. The supporting photographs are out of date.
6. The submission also states a section of wall and vegetation is to be removed. It is unclear whether this will be in addition to the section of wall already removed to widen the access for the new driveway, or if it is being applied for retrospectively.



2x double fan heat pump units
facing towards Iris Cottage

**Figure 4 – Photo of ASHP's
taken 5th April 2025**

Size and Scale of Development

7. Unlike other buildings on the Block Plan, Iris Cottage is in outline only, without differentiation of the roofline and single storey extension to the rear. To illustrate, *fig.2* above shows the plan with the roof ridge and rear extension added. In addition, *fig.4* highlights the sloping roof of our rear kitchen extension – please note the scale of the ASHP's compared to our kitchen wall.
8. The height of the proposed car port will be in line with our roof guttering at minimum, creating an overbearing and disproportional presence over Iris Cottage from The Street, and a towering effect next to our extension when viewed from our rear courtyard. (*figs.5 and 6*). This measurement is taken from our property, which sits 0.5m lower than the land level of Manor Farm, so it may potentially be higher.



Figure 5
Impact of height in relation to Iris Cottage from street scene



Figure 6
Impact of height and overbearing massing effect on rear extension

9. Whilst the Covering Letter and Heritage Statement both note the car port will be subservient to Manor Farm and will not compete visually with Iris Cottage, it cannot be considered subservient to Iris Cottage and the potential competitive visual impact can be disputed. It is stated that the development will enhance Iris Cottage; that is a matter of opinion - no specifics have been provided to justify that statement.
10. The Case Officer's Report notes the previous application for a cart shed at this site was refused on two counts relating to the siting, overall mass and scale. Whilst the height of the car port within

the new design has been lowered, the footprint is now wider and longer, so the changes do not reduce the mass and scale significantly.

- Proposed visual maximum ground-plan footprint of the new car port and plant/store is 7x7m (as noted in the Heritage Statement)
- Previous cart shed footprint - 6.5x6.4m (taken from Case Officer's Report)
- Footprint of Iris Cottage - 8.7x7.7m

11. The car port will run parallel with the entire length of Iris Cottage next to our living room, kitchen and bedroom walls. It will be almost as wide as Iris Cottage. Iris Cottage sits 0.5m lower at ground level than Manor Farm so this proposal will still be considerable in scale and comparison.
12. The change of use for this location means cars can drive and idle directly next to our house, which changes the amenity of this area. It was previously a garden space, inaccessible for cars, as the old garage stops far in front of our house.
13. The proximity and expanse of the car port will prevent safe access to maintain our rendered and painted north wall from a secure platform.
14. The choice of materials and design of the building is aesthetically pleasing and in keeping within the local area, but the impact created by the location will result in an "overcrowded" development which will have a negative impact within the Conservation Area (CA) and rural street scene. In comparison with the space surrounding other properties in Chirton, this development will be squeezed in on all sides. The design will obscure the existing outbuilding between Manor Farm and Iris Cottage which historically has been visible from the road and contributes to the character and distinctiveness of the area.
15. The addition of such a large structure into a small garden space between two existing Victorian buildings will diminish the open rural feel of The Street and detract from the historic nature of the surroundings; this in turn will have a detrimental impact on the eyeline views from the highway, creating a more cramped, urban appearance and create a precedent within the CA. The loss of the front garden from Manor Farm also significantly reduces the amount of green space fronting the highway.
16. Manor Farm already benefits from substantial on-site parking space and has existing vehicle access at two alternative points.
17. The car port is proposed for the same site as the 2024 application for a cart shed, when the location and negative impact on the street scene were considered by the Conservation Officer. She objected explicitly to the removal of existing vegetation and original front wall. She also noted that *"at the current time the new build cart shed has not been justified since other historic buildings (curtilage listed and listed) in close proximity to the farmhouse in the ownership of the applicant could be repaired and used for this purpose."* The decision to not use existing buildings, the current large garage or ample car parking already on site has not been explained. Although pre-dating the current owner, planning consent was granted historically for renovation of the existing large garage at Manor Farm (fig.7 - 14/10413/FUL).



Figure 7
Previous Planning for renovation of existing garage at
Manor Farm

Location of the Air Source Heat Pumps

18. The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) and the Institute of Acoustics (IOA) recommend that ASHP's are located 'as far away as possible from neighbouring premises and especially away from noise sensitive rooms such as living rooms or bedrooms.'¹ No mitigation has been taken to minimise impacts as far as reasonably practicable, to protect the amenity and quality of life for Iris Cottage, and the quality of the existing acoustic environment has not been demonstrated within the design. The units have been placed as close as possible, with the loudest part of the unit (fan and compressor) facing toward our living room and bedroom.
19. Considering the expanse of Manor Farm, there are alternative sites for the ASHP's within the curtilage, away from both properties, freestanding and concealed.
20. The application does not consider the cumulative impact from multiple units at one site and does not provide any scope for changes resulting from future remodelling of unit design to improve efficiency or upgrades.
21. Manor Farm is being fully renovated to include a large extension and extensive garden / grounds redesign. It would have been (and still is) relatively easy to have placed the ASHP's away from Iris Cottage.

Safety Warnings and Concerns

22. The Vaillant Installation manual for these specific 'aroTHERMplus' ASHP's notes the risk of fire 17 times, risk of death 10 times, and risk of explosion 16 times in varying contexts due to the associated risks of the use, leakage potential and maintenance of refrigerant, suggesting this is a noteworthy risk.² This count excludes any risks associated with transportation.
23. The refrigerant noted within the installation document for the 'aroTHERMplus' is R290. Historic England states that whilst R290 is less impactful for the environment, it has high flammability if an incident occurs.³
24. Although we accept the likelihood of incident occurrence may be low, *if* it occurred the harm impact could be catastrophic or fatal. All risks could be reduced or eliminated if the ASHP's were installed away from our property, not between our house and the car port. The gap between Iris Cottage and Manor Farm provides a natural firebreak between the two properties.
25. Bridging that gap will substantially increase the fire risk and potential for spread. Infilling with a wooden structure containing a vehicle (most likely "on charge"), stored items and two large ASHP's containing refrigerant near our chimney and adjacent to our kitchen seems counterintuitive. Last year a catastrophic fire crossed boundaries between our immediate neighbours; the effects are still raw and impactful within the village. Although the fire started in a shed, the hazardous material between the properties caused an explosion that destroyed our neighbours' home.
26. Given that Iris Cottage gains zero benefit from the ASHP's, it seems unfair that it carries all risks and negative impacts.

Noise Impact:

27. The main sources of noise in ASHP's are the fans and compressors which have been placed adjacent to our living room wall and bedroom⁴.
28. The ASHP's are exceptionally large in comparison to our gable wall. **All four fans point directly towards our wall** but away from the curtilage of Manor Farm. Due to the orientation, the fans will force heavy plumes of air to repeatedly hit the wall. In addition to proximity, fan direction should be considered because noise impact is loudest from the front of the unit.⁵
29. Chirton is a very quiet area, especially at night. The sound power level of ASHP's is only one assessment consideration. Any distinctive sound characteristics such as an audible buzz, clunk, vibration or irritating hum created by the ASHP's will also adversely affect the reasonable

¹ <https://www.planningportal.co.uk/permission/common-projects/heat-pumps/planning-permission-air-source-heat-pump>

² <https://professional.vaillant.co.uk/downloads/aproducts/renewables-1/arothers-plus/arothers-plus-vwl-35-75-a-s2-installation-operation-manual-0020330791-03-2806789.pdf>

³ <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/air-source-heat-pumps-historic-buildings/heag316-heat-pumps-historic-buildings/>

⁴ <https://www.planningportal.co.uk/permission/common-projects/heat-pumps/planning-permission-air-source-heat-pump>

⁵ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/659bc3f2614fa2000df3a992/ashp-planning-regulations-review-main-report.pdf>

enjoyment of our home. Intermittency, reverse cycles, tonality and defrost cycles are known to be louder and create greater disturbance than the general running output.

30. The ASHP's have been sited on a newly installed, purpose-built concrete slab which joins directly with our old concrete gulley and therefore, the foundations of Iris Cottage, further enhancing the impact from vibrations. The CIEH advises that when an ASHP is fixed to solid ground near foundations the vibrations can transfer to structures causing structure-borne noise to be re-radiated inside. Even if noise is low, this can cause significant adverse impact to occupiers. They also recommend the location of any ASHP should be considered with noise for neighbours as a priority concern.⁶
31. The CIEH and IOA note 'where a unit is adjacent to a wall, sound will be reflected from those surfaces, effectively resulting in higher sound levels at locations opposite the unit.'⁷ Adding the car port behind the ASHP's will create another reflective surface for increased noise transmission by forming an amplified alleyway between the two walls. The four fans and two compressors will sit between three reflective, extremely close proximity surfaces.
32. Locating the ASHP's away from Iris Cottage within the expansive curtilage of Manor Farm would be the neighbourly approach to solving our valid concerns.
33. The installation is situated far away from the living areas of Manor Farm; the applicants will enjoy all the benefits.

Energy Efficiency

34. An average 10°C reduction below ambient temperature is noted for the operation of ASHP's, with a plume of cold air felt up to 3m away.^{8 9} Having cold air blown repeatedly against the living room, bedroom and kitchen wall by four fans will decrease Iris Cottage's energy performance and efficiency substantially. This not only goes against a key Government driver to improve homes' energy performance, but also Wiltshire Council's '*Warm and Safe Wiltshire*' which aims for residents to live in safer and healthier homes.^{10 11 12}
35. Our home will be more difficult to heat and maintain heat, whilst also creating abnormal, avoidable cold spots, leading to increased heating need and higher energy bills.¹³
36. Whilst the ASHP's will increase energy efficiency at Manor Farm, their current installation will inversely affect the energy performance of Iris Cottage.

Damage to the North Wall of Iris Cottage

37. The four large fans will blow cold air repeatedly at our historic solid brick, rendered and painted wall. The cold air and moisture from the ASHP's will contribute to the collection of contaminants along the exterior and increase the potential for frost damage and degradation of paint.
38. Continuous cold air flowing from the ASHP's will result in cold walls, contributing to increased interstitial condensation buildup, potential for damp, mould, and rot, harmful to both the building and the health of its occupants.
39. The cold air will be blowing onto the wall directly adjacent to our working chimney, creating a disparity in temperatures across the wall, affecting the resulting thermal contraction and expansion rates and contributing to future cracking and damage to the external render.
40. The unneighbourly placement of the ASHP's means we suffer enormously from the waste products from the heating system, yet the applicants will not endure any adverse effects from vibration, noise, cold air impact, etc.

⁶ <https://www.cieh.org/media/7538/heat-pumps-briefing-note-professional-advice-note.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.cieh.org/media/7538/heat-pumps-briefing-note-professional-advice-note.pdf>

⁸ <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/air-source-heat-pumps-historic-buildings/heag316-heat-pumps-historic-buildings/>

⁹ <https://www.homebuilding.co.uk/advice/air-source-heat-pump-positioning>

¹⁰ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9428/>

¹¹ <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/1417/Home-energy-efficiency>

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/help-to-save-households-money-and-deliver-cleaner-heat-to-homes>

¹³ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8830/>

Summary

- No reference to the retrospective elements of development.
- Overdevelopment of a narrow site with impact on the street scene within the CA.
- Overbearing and disproportional presence over Iris Cottage.
- Alternative, more appropriate location options for development, including existing garage.
- Objection to the ASHP's in relation to
 - location and proximity
 - reduced energy efficiency and increased heating requirements for Iris Cottage
 - noise pollution
 - damage to wall
 - increased risks to safety and health
 - misrepresentation of the size and output of the ASHP's

Whilst we support in principle the move towards greener energy for a more sustainable future, we do not agree that the ASHP benefits enjoyed by Manor Farm should be to the detriment, expense, and decreased energy performance of Iris Cottage. In line with Paragraphs 207-8, and in particular 209 of the National Planning Policy Framework,¹⁴ we consider this application brings no local benefits to outweigh the levels of harm it will cause to Iris Cottage as a non-designated historical asset and believe it should be refused.

Yours sincerely,

Mr and Mrs Eschbaecher

¹⁴ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf