

Benchmark

Benchmark Development Planning Ltd

Chartered Town Planners & Development Advisers

The Planning Balance 14/08/25:

The Old Vicarage, Homington Road, Coombe Bissett,

Salisbury, Wiltshire SP5 4LR

Proposal: “Demolition of the existing dwelling and garage and replacement with a new dwelling (self-build) with other associated works including landscape treatment, infrastructure and vehicle parking.”

1. The Old Vicarage has been the subject of several planning applications over the past 16 years. The house has lain vacant since 2015. All the proposals have failed to either secure planning permission or be viable, with permissions then lapsing. At **Appendix 1** is a summary of that troubled planning history.
2. At **Appendix 2** there is the complete photographic record of the interior and exterior of the house. The building is now dilapidated and the garden 'strimmed', but still largely scruffy.
3. It is a big 6-bedroom house and garage that has a 320 sqm footprint. It sits within grounds of about 4,230 sqm. The old house has a gross internal area of 478 sqm.

A little bit of background: The applicants bought the site a year ago. This is their second planning application. Their first application was submitted in October 2024 (PL/2024/09412) and then withdrawn - 6 months later – in April 2025. The application was only withdrawn because of a disagreement about the heritage value of the house. **More detailed, new, independent advice from Forum Heritage, confirms the house could be replaced, by a suitable new house (more of which later).**

4. Whilst largely hidden from view, the site is probably now the biggest area of vacant previously development land within Coombe Bissett and there is a growing interest in seeing the site being used for housing, again – see **BUNDLE 1: Statement of Community Involvement (SCI):**

... the only realistic solution is to replace sympathetically ...

Mr and Mrs S 23/12/24

... the proposed building is attractive and will be an asset to the architecture of our village ...

Mr & Mrs P 13/01/25

... it is a thoroughly sensible proposal ...

Mr J 15/11/24

... A new sympathetically designed energy efficient single dwelling would be heartily endorsed by the majority of local residents

and will enhance the Conservation Area ...

Mr & Mrs D 12/03/25

There were several more equally powerful letters of support.

5. The Authority's Planning Register – for the first (withdrawn application) published all these details, including, furthermore ...
6. The Parish Council had no objection (15/11/24) and indeed voiced the strong plea: protect the two London Plane trees at the entrance.
7. The Planning Register also records that the Authority's Ecologist supported the scheme, subject to the usual conditions and proper mitigation.
8. No objection from 'Highways'.
9. **The reason for withdrawing the planning application?**
- Heritage – the loss of the house.

10. **Q: What are we submitting today?**

Ans: Ten comprehensive and compelling topic-centred documents supported by about a dozen or so architectural plans and also tree and environmental protection plans and a (sewage) Pre-Packaged Treatment Plant (PPTW) plan with detailed data sheet (Graf One2Clean – as currently preferred by Wiltshire Council).

All these documents set out 10 clear planning reasons why this latest detailed planning application should be granted conditional planning permission:

- Bundle 1 **Statement of Community Involvement** (SCI) – full support from neighbours and PC, in principle.
- Bundle 2 **Draft Neighbourhood Plan** – full support from PC, in principle.
- Bundle 3 **Sustainable design** – in social, economic and environmental terms – strongly supports.
- Bundle 4 **Full ecological mitigation** – supports approval.
- Bundle 5 **Detailed Construction and Environmental Management Plan** – supports.
- Bundle 6 **Full heritage justification** - supports.
- Bundle 7 **Design and CP 57** – supports.
- Bundle 8 **Access, tracking, car parking and highways** – supports.
- Bundle 9 **Trees – protection during construction and thereafter** – supports.
- Bundle 10 **The Planning Balance** – weighs heavily in favour of conditional approval because it accords with the planning policy framework at:
 - the national level (NPPF/PPG);
 - the county level (Core Strategy etc); and,
 - Local level (Neighbourhood Plan) ... we now quickly deal with the 'NP'.

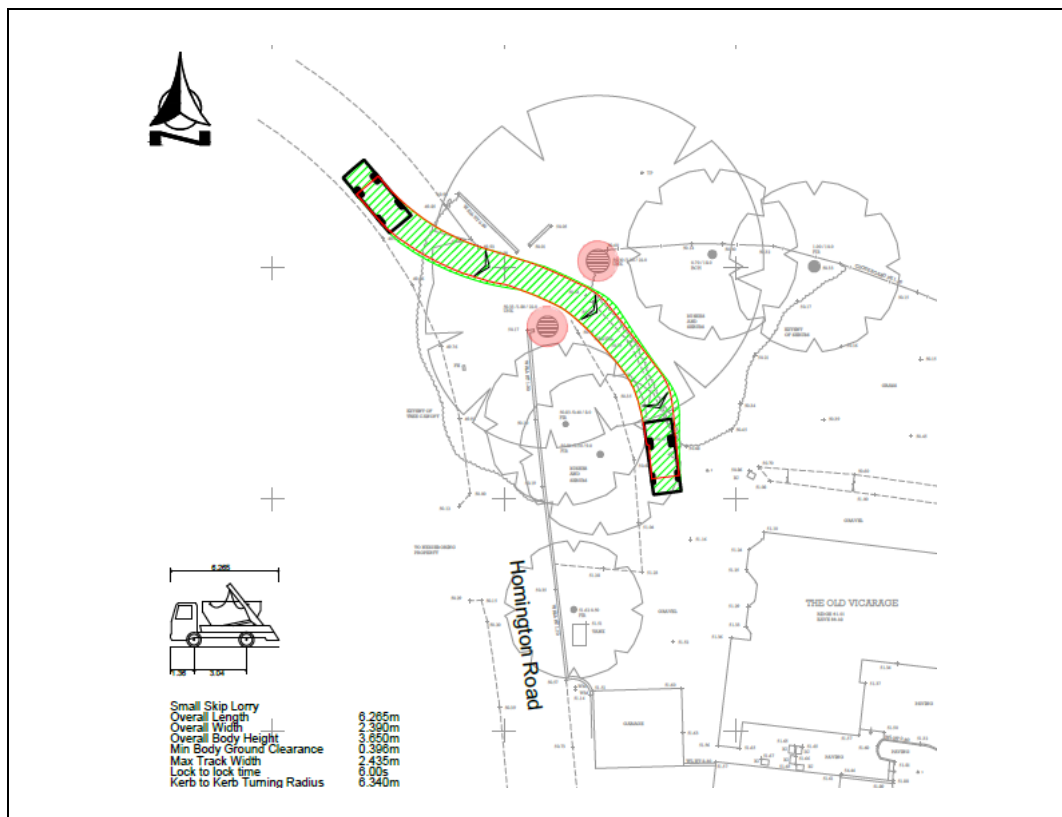
11. **The Draft Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan (March '25)** allocates The Old Vicarage for housing. The Plan would allow for the demolition and replacement of the house – see **BUNDLE 2: Draft Neighbourhood Plan** – and we are supporting the Plan strenuously and would help those involved with the road to the NP Referendum, if necessary.
12. **This proposal accords strongly with Draft Policy AS1: Allocated Site: The Old Vicarage – as demonstrated systematically, at BUNDLE 2 / page 1.**
13. The **Draft Wiltshire Local Plan Review** identifies a requirement for 18 new dwellings at Coombe Bissett. This site will help address that clear and pressing housing need to help the village grow and remain 'vital'.
14. From the outset, The Walker Family have willingly promoted a sustainable design and are keen to minimise environmental impacts, promote energy efficiency and build a beautiful Georgian style house – a fit for purpose home – that will preserve and enhance the Conservation Area and add to (not detract from) the village. **BUNDLE 3: Sustainability** - begins to set out their case on this key matter.

15. Whilst the first (withdrawn) application gained the support of the County Ecologist, this second application takes the mitigation proposals a step further and proposes even more mitigation than before – see **BUNDLE 4: Ecology**. (BNG does not apply to a householder application.)
16. The Family has also taken the first steps towards ensuring the delivery of their proposed ecological and tree mitigation – see **BUNDLE 5: Preliminary Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)**.
17. But of course, the construction of this new home, entails the demolition of The Old Vicarage. A wholly new heritage consultant has been brought into the fold: Bob Edwards of Forum Heritage, a firm based in Salisbury, practising mainly in the SW and SE. He has worked with Wiltshire Council and is well known to the longer serving heritage officers, at the Authority.
18. Before starting the work on this second planning application, The Family spent a good deal of time (April – June 2025) just talking to several heritage architects – ‘on site’ - with particular experience of working with older buildings. All of these local experts work regularly with the heritage officers at Wiltshire Council.
19. Given the level of local popular support – see Statement of Community Involvement (BUNDLE 2) – and the widely held view amongst ‘the professionals’ – The Family asked Bob Edwards to complete his research and to set out his advice in a report – now, **BUNDLE 6A: Full Heritage Justification**.
20. **BUNDLE 6A:** is a full and compelling justification why Officers and Cllrs are able to grant planning permission to replace the existing Old Vicarage. The advice is clear. The Old Vicarage is not listable and not even of sufficient interest to warrant recognition as a Non-Designated Heritage Asset. The replacement will be a Georgian style house of notably higher architectural quality than the present heavily and unsympathetically altered Old Vicarage.
21. All our evidence indicates it is just an old building in very poor condition: **BUNDLE 6B: Heritage Condition Survey**.
22. Bob Edwards has described the replacement house as a **“traditional Georgian style house of a notably higher architectural quality than the present heavily and unsympathetically altered building”** (para 7.1 BUNDLE 6A).
23. Our **BUNDLE 7: Assessment of Site-Specific Policies:** evaluates the replacement house against the requirement to propose high quality and sustainable designs, taking fully into account advice in the NPPF and Core Strategy CP 57 etc. We also demonstrate the scheme accords with CP58 Heritage, CP67 Flood Risk and CP 61 Highways. Whilst not an exhaustive comparison against all policies, this bundle demonstrates that the scheme accords with the most important and relevant policy requirements.

24. **BUNDLE 8: Access, tracking, car parking and highways** responds to Wiltshire Council's lead Tree Officer in the south of the County, Shane Verrion. Mr Verrion, raised a question – also raised by the Parish Council - about how to protect the principal two London Plane trees at the entrance to The Old Vicarage.
25. The importance of those trees is recognised by many. Bob Edwards made the following comments, too:

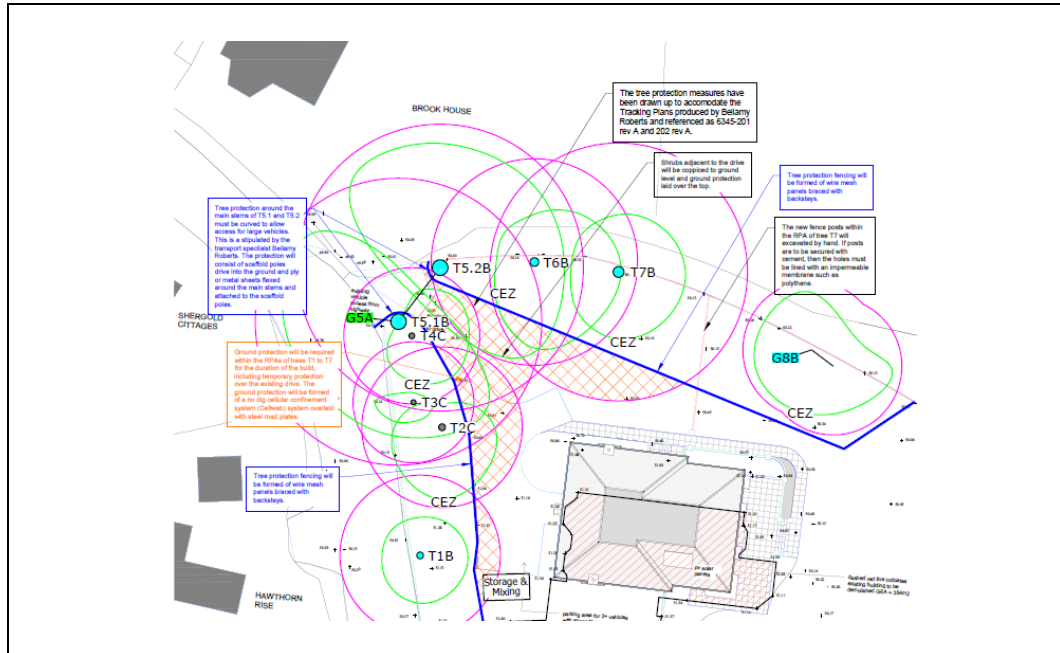
“Importantly, the proposed development will retain the two large trees at the entrance” ... “there will be no significant alteration to the street scene” (para 7.5 of BUNDLE 6A).

26. Of course, this second time, with this new planning application, we have fully investigated the likely tracking of construction traffic, to seek to guarantee the longevity of those important trees. Bellamy Roberts – Highway Engineers – have been commissioned by The Family to produce detailed plans to demonstrate how materials will be delivered and exported from site. Here is an example of their dozens of HGV-tracking plans, with the two trees protected by robust circular barriers (shown as red circles, below):



(See BUNDLE 8 / 3)

27. **BUNDLE 9: Trees – protection during construction and thereafter** – the computer-generated tracking (above) has been used to help RMT Trees design robust and suitable pre-commencement protection for the trees (the London Plane Trees are shown as T5.1B and T5.2B below), particularly their roots and lower tree-trunks. The red cross-hatching and thick blue lines are the layers of strong and well-designed protection:



28. The Planning Balance:

The Family have completed early engagement with their first (withdrawn) planning application and this has sparked good quality discussions with our neighbours and all the relevant consultees.

As Officers indicated that they may have been minded to refuse the first application under delegated powers, we are requesting that this matter be called-to-committee by the Cllr for Downton and Ebble Valley, within the first 21 days of the application becoming valid.

Our BUNDLES of evidence, our plans and other papers, all indicate this proposal is in accordance with the development plan, and that there are no policy or any other material considerations to justify a refusal (NPPF – para 48).

Our proposal is also a ringing endorsement of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan.

There is a strong presumption in favour of sustainable development, particularly where underused and vacant land within large villages, needs to be recycled and long-term viable – and much needed – uses, found.

Richard Greenwood BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

APPENDIX

1

Visual guide to relevant planning history of The Old Vicarage, Coombe Bissett 1978 - July 2025

	Planning application
	Tree application
	Approved
	Refused
	Withdrawn

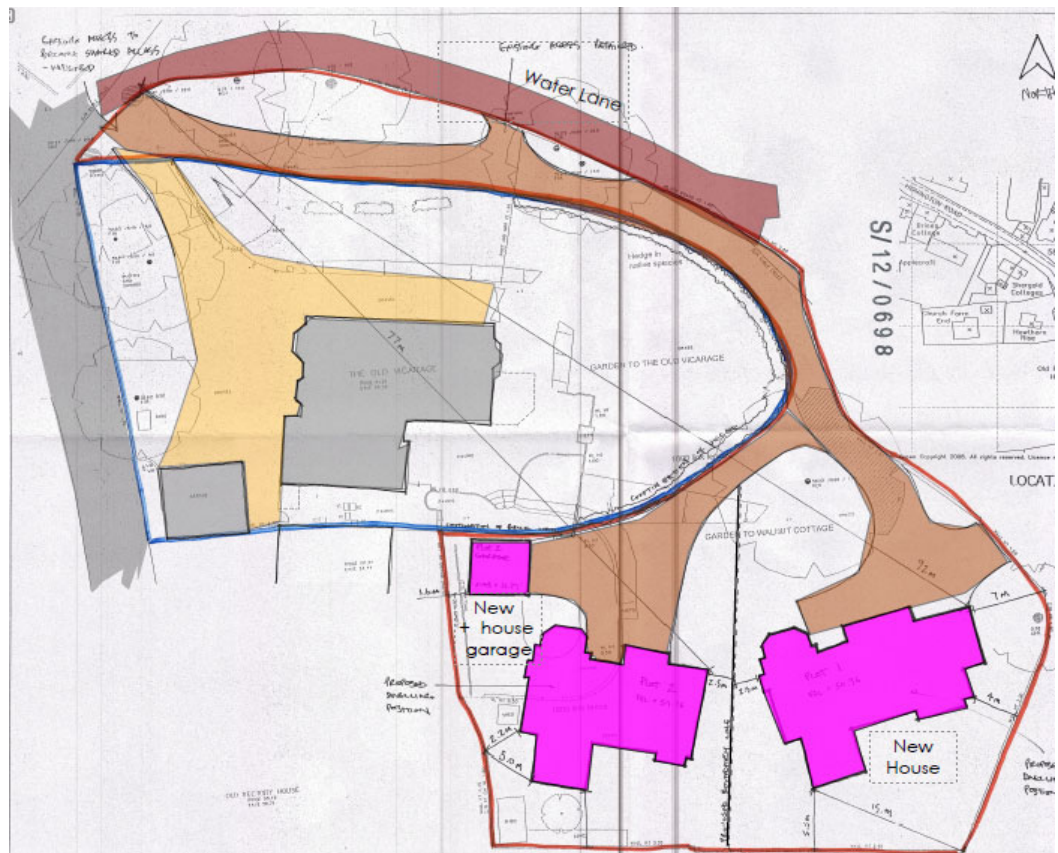
					Is it relevant?
1	S/1978/0718	Erection of a double garage	Approve	14/01/1978	Not really.
2	S/1981/0383	Demolition of existing summer house and erection of a bungalow and garage	Withdrawn	09/06/1981	Not really.
3	S/1981/0857	Demolition of existing summer house and erection of bungalow and garage	Refused	26/08/1981	Not really.
4	S/2003/2289	REDUCE ASH TREE BY 25%	Approve	12/03/2003	Not really.
5	S/2004/1450	REAR CONSERVATORY	Approve with Conditions	08/10/2004	Not really.
6	S/2008/1480	FELL 1 X HORSE CHESTNUT TREE	Approve	10/10/2008	Not really.
7	S/2008/1759	VARIOUS TREE WORKS	Approve	24/11/2008	Not really.
8	S/2009/1694	CONVERT EXISTING 6 BEDROOM DWELLING WITH SELF-CONTAINED FLAT TO FORM 1 NO. 5 BEDROOM DWELLING, AND 1 NO. 2 BEDROOM DWELLING. FORM SITE ACCESS ROAD AND CONSTRUCT SINGLE STOREY 3 BEDROOM DWELLING (2 OF THE BEDROOMS IN ROOF SPACE)	Approve with Conditions	08/06/2009	Yes - see page 2.
9	S/2009/1348	CONVERT EXISTING 6 BEDROOM DWELLING WITH SELF-CONTAINED FLAT TO FORM 1 NO. 5 BEDROOM DWELLING, AND 1 NO. 2 BEDROOM DWELLING. FORM SITE ACCESS ROAD AND CONSTRUCT SINGLE STOREY 3 BEDROOM DWELLING (2 OF THE BEDROOMS IN ROOF SPACE)"	Withdrawn	03/11/2009	Yes - see page 3.
10	S/2012/0689	1 x Walnut, overall reduction of up to 25%	Approve	22/06/2012	Not really.
11	S/2012/0698	Erection of 2 detached bungalows with rooms in roof and garages	Withdrawn	21/06/2012	Yes - see page 4.
12	S/2012/1269	Application for an amendment to approved application S/2009/1694, the erection of a detached three bedroom dwelling (two bedrooms in roof space) and form site access road	Approve with Conditions	26/11/2012	Yes - see page 5.
13	PL/2022/00198	Partial demolition of the existing house and outbuildings, alteration and extension of the house and construction of four detached houses to the rear. Formation of new access onto Homington Road and demolition and replacement of front boundary wall	Withdrawn	11/07/2022	Yes - see page 6.
14	PL/2022/06579	Partial demolition of the existing house and outbuildings, alteration and extension of the house and construction of three detached houses (3 x three bedroom) to the rear. Formation of new access onto Homington Road and demolition and replacement of front boundary wall (amended scheme).	Withdrawn	09/03/2023	Yes - see page 7.
15	PL/2024/09412	Demolition of the existing dwelling and garage and replacement with a new dwelling (self build) with other associated works including landscape treatment, infrastructure and vehicle parking.	Withdrawn	07/04/2025	Yes - see page 8.

[illegible]

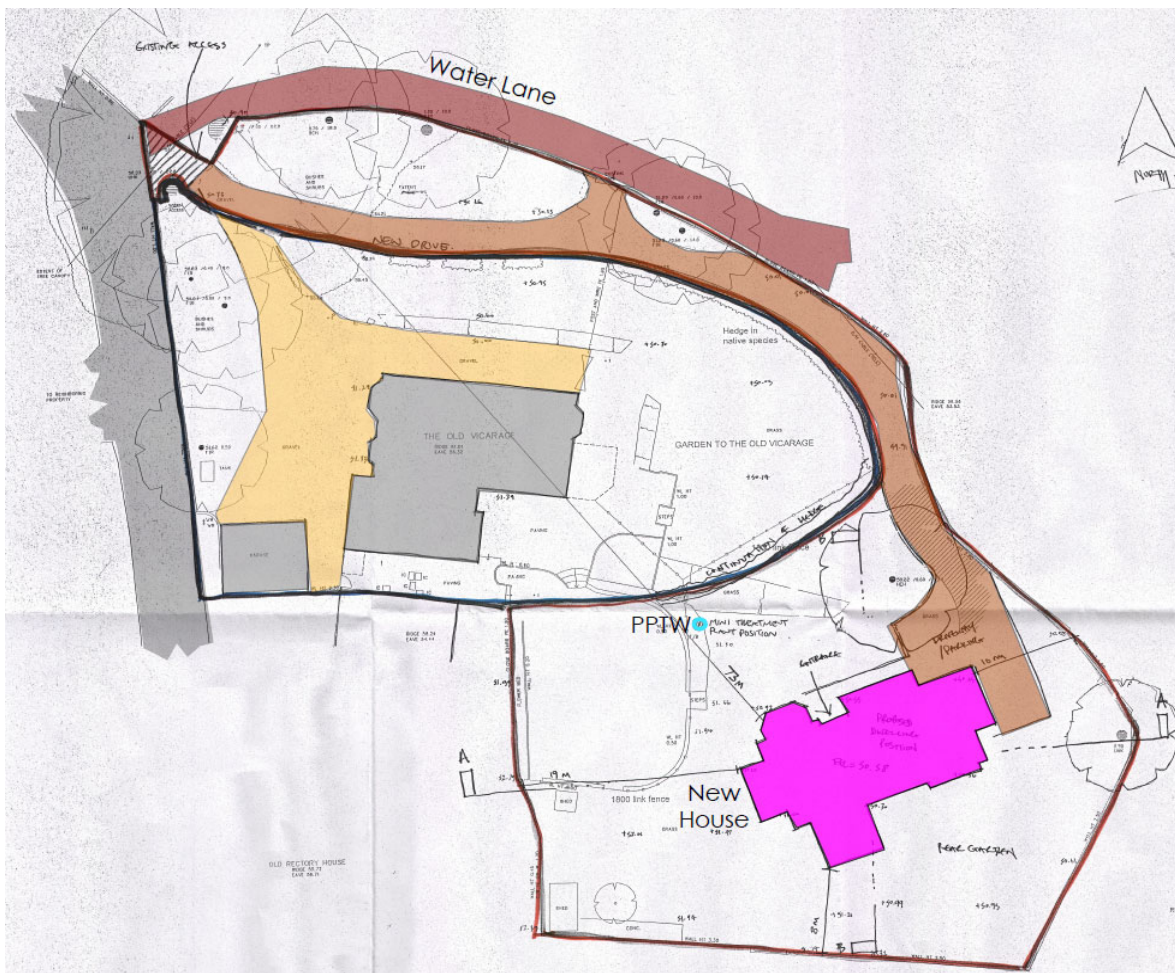
S/2009/1694: Planning permission granted to:
"CONVERT EXISTING 6 BEDROOM DWELLING WITH SELF-CONTAINED FLAT TO FORM 1 NO. 5
BEDROOM DWELLING, AND 1 NO. 2 BEDROOM DWELLING. FORM SITE ACCESS ROAD AND
CONSTRUCT SINGLE STOREY 3 BEDROOM DWELLING (2 OF THE BEDROOMS IN ROOF
SPACE)"



S/2012/0698: Planning application WITHDRAWN for: "Erection of 2 detached bungalows with rooms in roof and garages."



S/2012/1269: Planning permission granted for: "Application for an amendment to approved application S/2009/1694, the erection of a detached three bedroom dwelling (two bedrooms in roof space) and form site access road."



PL/2022/00198: Planning application WITHDRAWN for: "Partial demolition of the existing house and outbuildings, alteration and extension of the house and construction of four detached houses to the rear. Formation of new access onto Homington Road and demolition and replacement of front boundary wall."



PL/2022/06579: Planning application WITHDRAWN for: "Partial demolition of the existing house and outbuildings, alteration and extension of the house and construction of THREE detached houses to the rear. Formation of new access onto Homington Road and demolition and replacement of front boundary wall (amended scheme)."



PL/2022/06579: Planning application WITHDRAWN for: "Demolition of the existing dwelling and garage and replacement with a new dwelling (self build) with other associated works including landscape treatment, infrastructure and vehicle parking."



APPENDIX

2



BEN 4000: Drone photograph taken June 2025 (Operator licence: 9BPV24DTK9BG)



LDS ref: 20002 – Photographic Survey

The Old Vicarage, Homington Road, Coombe Bissett, Salisbury

Wednesday 2nd July 2025

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