

## Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

### URBAN DESIGN

**Officer name:**

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**Date:** 12.09.2025

**Application No:** PL/2025/05943

**Proposal:** Outline planning application with all matters reserved for residential development for up to 20 dwellings, associated works including infrastructure, ancillary facilities and landscaping. Construction of a new vehicular access off Spitfire Road.

**Site Address:** Land East of Spitfire Road, Calne

**Case Officer:** Jonathan James

### Reference:

Drawings and documents indexed on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025 on Wiltshire Council planning application webpage, in particular:

- Drawing No: 3.381.UD.01G Illustrative Masterplan
- Design and Access Statement (July 2025)
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (26/06/2025)
- Ecological Impact Assessment & Biodiversity Net Gain (version VF1 dated 22.05.2025)
- Arboricultural Survey, Impact Assessment and Protection Plan (ref: 23284 LAND EAST OF SPITFIRE ROAD, CALNE\_TS AIA TPP\_V4)

### Policy and guidance:

- Wiltshire Core Strategy, Core Policy 57 'Ensuring high quality design and place shaping' (Abbreviated CP57)
- Wiltshire Design Guide – Wiltshire Council Supplementary Planning Document adopted 25th March 2024 (abbreviated WDG)
- Building for a Healthy Life (Homes England June 2020) (referenced in the NPPF) (abbreviated BfHL)
- Streets for a Healthy Life -a companion to Building for a Healthy Life (Homes England 2022).
- Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan (Made March 2025) (abbreviated CCNP)
- CCNP Design Guidelines and Codes (Final Report March 2023) (abbreviated DGC)

Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy Policy CP57 'Ensuring high quality design and place shaping': A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality.

## Observations

The proposal is outside of the framework boundary for Calne and has not been allocated for residential development within the Wiltshire Core Strategy (January 2015), the emerging Wiltshire Council local Plan (January 2023) or any other development plan document and as such would normally raise a sustainability reason for refusal on this basis. Notwithstanding this, should the principle of development on this site be considered, I have the following comments on the development proposals.

The site is located adjacent to previously consented developments allowed through appeal for up to 90 dwellings and a new local centre, reference PL/2022/07893 and PL/2023/10421, and the proposed access will be through this adjacent consented development. Highways have raised no objection to this access arrangement in principle.

At this early stage no specific house designs have been submitted, and my observations are therefore generally related to the layout in outline.

## Objection

### Landscape buffers

- 1) One of the Design Concepts within the DAS is the '*Inclusion of landscaped buffers along the site boundaries to allow space to maintain the existing hedgerows*' (page 40). Development appears to encroach particularly on H2 where the buffer is less than 2 meters. I would normally expect a buffer of at least 5 meters to be provided adjacent to retained hedgerows to allow for this, however, any landscape mitigation should follow the advice of the Landscape Officer, and I will likely defer to them.

The lack of a suitable buffer would also limit the ability of the proposals to meet another Design Concept within the DAS; namely '*Retention of existing hedgerows where possible, with additional tree planting to strengthen vegetation around the site boundaries and within the site itself*'. (page 40)

### Levels

- 2) To provide the additional flood resilience, levels across the site are to be raised by the amount shown on drawing No. 647-P-010 - SuDS Strategy. The extract of the drawing below shows the proposals in the north east corner of the site.



THE FFL for the northern plot is shown as 1.1m above the existing ground level approx. 1.5 meters away from H2. Furthermore, a 0.45 meter high retaining wall is shown adjacent to H2 and with a bank/slope less than 1.5 meters from H3. With reference to note 1) above, insufficient space has been provided to fully safeguard hedges H2 and H3 in situ in these locations. I would expect a similar slope to be required to the proposed retaining wall adjacent to H2. I would welcome sections through H2 and H3 to demonstrate how the development proposals intend to mitigate the level changes proposed wrt H2 and H3.

I also note that the extent of the proposed slope has not been shown on the Illustrative Masterplan.

The private driveway to the west of the access is shown approx. 1.1 meters above the level of H2. In my opinion insufficient space has been provided in the development proposals for safeguarding H2 in situ and insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate how this change in level will be delivered – not least because users of this private drive will be at risk from a 1.1 meter fall without some form of barrier. Also see comment 5) below.

The proposed access is shown as approx. 1.1 meters above the levels of the adjoining site. It is not clear at this stage how the level changes between the proposed access and the adjacent consented development access road levels will be coordinated.

### Swale

- 3) WRT note 2) above, a swale is shown along the length of the private drive to the west of the access. It is not clear at this stage how this can be delivered given that there is less than 1.5 meters between H2 and the private drive. In my opinion insufficient space has been provided in the development proposals and I would expect to see a minimum 5 meter landscape/ecological buffer to H2 (note 1) above) then the swale and then the slope/retaining structure/barrier for the private drive.

### Foraging/commuting corridors

- 4) Paragraph 10.3.12 of the Ecological Impact Assessment & Biodiversity Net Gain states that *'Planting of large specimen trees either side of where the road intersects the northern corridor would help to facilitate the passage of bats and maintain this corridor'*. I can see no evidence that this has been provided.

### Layout

- 5) The parking court to the south side of the development would be visually poor. Furthermore, it will be raised approx. 0.6 meters above existing ground level increasing its visual impact on the surrounding countryside. Preference would be to locate the parking court to the north of the site, appropriately enclosed by planting and a stone wall boundary, overlooked by an adjacent dwelling, with the two dwellings currently overlooking the existing attenuation area to the north relocated to face the southern boundary. Perhaps the turning head could be relocated as part of this rear parking court and parking for the two dwellings currently shown as accessed by the private drive located within the parking court to remove the need for the private drive along H2 (see notes 2) and 3) above).
- 6) It is not clear from the proposals if access for all is achievable to the LAP via the informal footpath shown given the 0.6 meter level change proposed by the raised levels.
- 7) The circular foot/cycle path around the proposed indicative SuDS feature could be provided along the north and east edges only, reducing the need to remove the amount of G2

proposed. The SuDS feature could be re-designed to avoid G2, retaining and enhancing this existing feature.

- 8) The same issues for H2 adjacent to the entrance apply to H2 to the west of the site, namely that insufficient space for a landscape/ecological buffer has been provided. Furthermore, a footpath along the northern boundary outside of the landscape buffer would help to provide access to dwellings fronting the northern boundary and follow a desire line to Spitfire Road.
- 9) The Illustrative Masterplan and DAS have not provided a sufficient level of detail to meet the WDG Supplementary Planning Document particularly regarding minimum garden sizes and back-to-back distances (WDG 9.2 Expectation: Private Amenity Space).

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed development in its current configuration would not meet the high standard of design and place shaping required by Core Policy 57.

## Informatives

The WDG recommends in Appendix C – Recommended Design Information providing as much information as possible at Outline stage to facilitate a smoother consideration at reserved matter. A Parameters Plan is necessary to fix the protection of key features, the amount and purpose of green infrastructure features and the buffer distances from existing vegetation. A Movement, Density, Scale and Massing, Open Space / GI & BI Parameter Plan(s) should be provided at this stage to support an OUT application.

Appearance - there is insufficient information submitted to comment on appearance at this stage, however, I would draw the applicant's attention particularly to the WDG section 4.0 Built Form and BfHL Distinctive Places 'what green looks like' for development proposals. I would welcome design features such as bay windows and chimney stacks to help to meet the requirements of the WDG and BfHL.

Materials - there is insufficient information submitted to comment on materials at this stage, however, I would draw the applicant's attention particularly to the WDG for development proposals in North Wiltshire on this matter *'Applicants and assessors may find it useful to make appropriate use of the 'Cotswold Design Code' (Cotswold District Council, March 2000) which provides guidance on faithfully reflecting this style'*.

Building heights – the DAS states a maximum two storey height blanketed across the developable area. I accept that this is in line with the local context, however, I recommend articulation of roof form (including the use of gables, gablets, chimneys etc.) to articulate the street hierarchy, improve place making and avoid a monotonous development response.

If the applicant seeks to pursue the application, I would refer them to Building for a Healthy Life in the first instance and use it to review their design concept and process.