

THE OLD FARMHOUSE, 9 MILL LANE, POULSHOT, WILTSHIRE

Heritage Statement



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Heritage Statement

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Old Farmhouse, is a Grade II listed building located within Townsend, a small area of settlement including the parish church located south-west of the main area the village of Poulshot, Wiltshire. The property lies on the north side of Mill Lane within the Poulshot Conservation Area. The owners of the property are seeking to build make some alterations to the building requiring planning and listed building, plans for which are being prepared by Fowler Architecture and Planning.

1.2 Forum Heritage Services has been commissioned to make an assessment of the heritage significance of the house and the potential impact of the proposals upon that significance and to prepare a Heritage Statement in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Bob Edwards BSc (Hons) PG Dip. IHBC MCIfA, Director of Forum Heritage Services, visited the property in August 2025 and subsequently prepared this report.

1.3 This report will present:

- A brief background history to the site
- A description of the listed building
- Policy and guidance background
- An assessment of the significance of the listed building following Historic England's *Statements of Heritage Significance Assessing Significance in Heritage Assets* (Historic England Advice Note 12, 2019)
- An assessment of the potential impact of the proposals upon the significance of the listed building
- Conclusions

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The earliest map consulted showing The Old Farmhouse is the Poulshot Tithe map of .1840 (Figure 1). This shows the house as part of a small farmstead with a L-plan agricultural building range to the rear and a further farm building to the south-east set corner to corner with the house. The house was a linear range with no additions to the rear.

2.2 The 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25" map of 1886 shows that there had been relatively little change within the farmstead group (Figure 2). The house appears to have been extended to the north-west and there was a small timber-built addition to the south-east gable.

2.3 By 1924 (3rd edition OS 25" map, not illustrated) the only evident change within the group was the loss of the north-west arm of the L-plan range.



Figure 1 Poulshot Tithe map, c.1840.

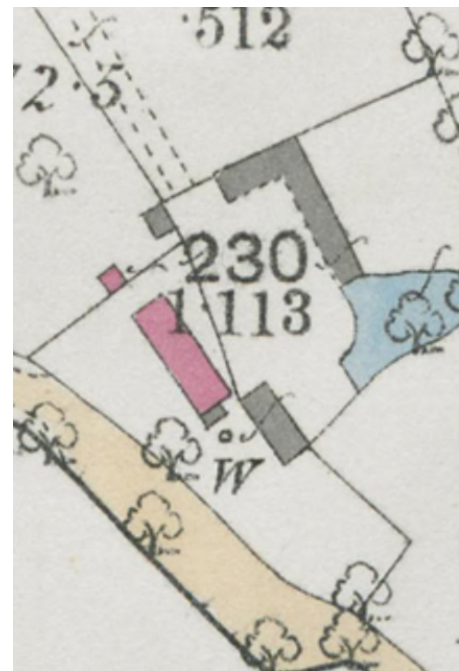


Figure 2 Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25" map, 1886.

2.4 Although the historic maps do not name the farmstead, planning records from the 1970s refer to the property as Newman's Farm. In 1977 permission was granted for the 'demolition of dilapidated barns' and the construction of a new garage building (K/77/0121).

2.5 The Old Farmhouse was added to the *List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest* at Grade II in 1987. The building is described in the *List* as:

House, C16 raised in late C18 or early C19 and refenestrated in C20. Roughcast over brick with Bridgwater tile roof, hipped to west and one stack on north roof slope. Two storeys, 3-window range entirely of C20 timber windows. Centre door. Lean-to on west end. Interior: ground floor left room has heavy chamfered beams to 4-panel compartmental ceiling and exceptionally large unmoulded stone depressed-arched fireplace. Chamfered beam in ground floor right room. C18 or early C19 roof trusses. Included for interior features.

2.6 In 1994 consent was granted for the present two-storey extension to the rear of the house and minor internal works (K/30209/L). No plans for these works are available on the Council web site. A further application for an additional two-storey rear extension to be added to the north-east end of the 1994 extension was approved in 2019 (19/09113/FUL and 19/09389/LBC) (Figures 3 and 4). Included in this application was the creation of the door opening from the drawing room into the north-western lean-to and alteration of the openings on the south-east side of the 1994 extension.

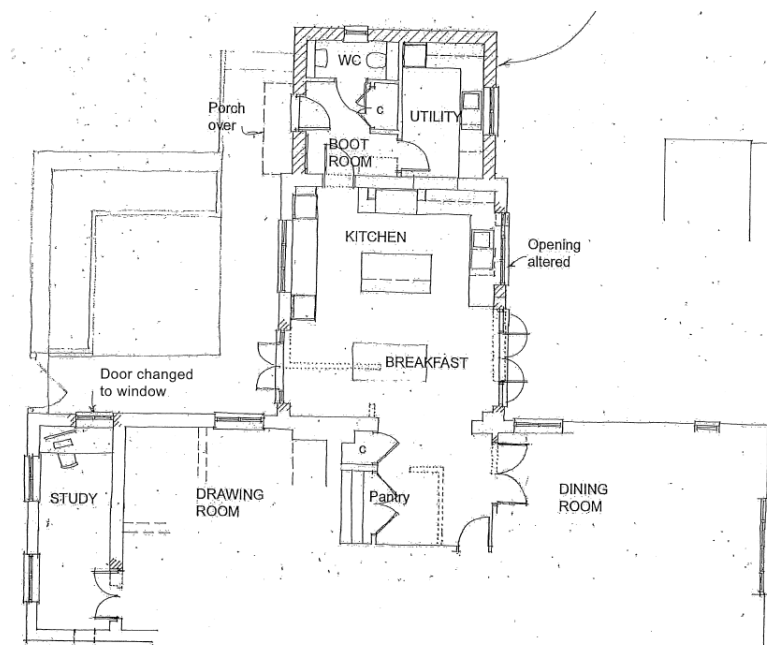


Figure 3
Proposed ground
floor plan 2019
(19/09389/LBC).



SIDE (south) ELEVATION

New door opening/
existing altered

Figure 4
Proposed south-east
elevation
(19/09389/LBC).

3.0 DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The Old Farmhouse the two-storey building with roughcast render to the elevations and a double Roman tile roof which is hipped to the west and gabled to the east (Figure 5). There is a central front door and three windows at first floor level. At ground floor level to the west room there is a bow window, single-light casements either side of the central door, and to the eastern ground floor room, a two-light casement. There are single-storey lean-to additions at each end, that to the west being the smaller of the two having a circular window, the addition to the east having a fully glazed door in the front elevation. There is a single chimney stack of one flue set behind the ridge between the western and central bays of the house.
- 3.3 At the rear there is a two-storey extension projecting from the central part of the house with, to the either side, modern two-light casements with top opening lights at ground and first floor levels in the rear elevation of the original range (Figure 6). A single-storey lean-to is attached to the north-east gable of the extension.



Figure 5 Front elevation.



Figure 6 Part of the rear elevation and the modern rear extension from the east.

- 3.4 The ground floor plan of the house consists of two principal rooms either side of the central bay in which a modern stair rises to the first floor. The stair is set in an atypical position within the front part of the bay rising along the axis of the building with a pantry behind accessed from the modern extension, and a passage leading to the kitchen to the south-east. To the north-west is the sitting room which is heated by a fireplace with two massive stone blocks forming the lintel over which has a segmental arch rather than a conventional depressed arch as noted in the list description (Figure 7). The left jamb of the fireplace is clearly a re-used piece of masonry unlike the right-hand jamb. The ceiling of the room is divided into four panels by axial and transverse beams which have deep chamfers. These beams are set into further beams set against the front (south-west) and south-east walls but there are no beams to the other two walls, so this is not a fully coffered ceiling. Whilst both transverse and axial beams meet chamfered blocks forming part of the beams to the sides wall, at the cross-over between the two beams there is not the same detail as might be expected if all timbers were original to this ceiling (Figures 8 and 9). The axial beam is clearly a historic timber, but the transverse beam to the north-east has what appear to be modern planer marks (Figure 10). The beam against the front wall has a scarfed section of modern timber at its north-west end. The detail of this ceiling raises questions as to whether it is a historic arrangement.



Figure 7 The fireplace to the sitting room.



Figure 8 Detail of the junction between the axial beam and the beam to the south-east wall.



Figure 9 Detail of the junction between the axial and transverse beams.



Figure 10
Detail of the north-east section of the transverse beam showing clear machine planer marks.

3.5 The dining room to the south-east of the entrance hall is the smaller of the two principal rooms. Apart from a deeply chamfered transverse beam which has void mortices for joists that have largely been covered by modern applied boards, there are no features of interest in this unheated room (Figure 11). The modern window to the rear wall is within a slightly recessed area close to the partition wall to the entrance hall.

3.6 The majority, if not all internal doors are modern, as are the windows at ground and first floor levels.



Figure 11 The dining room looking towards the rear wall where the window is set into a slightly recessed section of wall.

3.7 At first floor level the main feature of interest is part of an early principal rafter exposed in the north-west wall of the landing, the timber possibly being part of a jointed cruck, with later timbers forming a post and interrupted tie (Figure 12). This arrangement probably related to the creation of a door opening through the truss following the insertion of a floor over an open hall, the presence of which is suggested by the smoke-blackening of the upper part of this truss visible in the attic (Figure 13) although the collar is un-blackened. There is a blackened purlin to the front slope over the central bay, but it is set into the later principal relating to the raised eaves and so is presumably re-used from the earlier roof.

3.8 The trusses to the south-east are later, relating to the higher eaves line and have in-line butt purlins (Figure 14). There are no historic rafters surviving – the roof has clearly largely been rebuilt leaving the historic trusses in situ. The tie beams and lower parts of the principal rafters of these trusses are exposed at first floor level (Figure 15). The roof to the north-west of the blackened truss is also all later fabric with modern rafters. The section of the stack within the roof has been rebuilt.



Figure 12
The lower part of a principal truss with a later post and interrupted tie. Above the principal rafter is a further principal rafter relating to a raising of the eaves level.



Figure 13 The upper part of the smoke-blackened principal truss on the line of the partition between the sitting room and entrance hall bays. Void narrow mortices for wind braces and larger sockets for butt purlins can be seen.



Figure 14 The later trusses to the south-eastern part of the roof.



Figure 15 The exposed tie beams of the later part of the roof relating to the raised eaves.

4.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the statutory approach to the management of historic buildings and areas and requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building and any features of architectural or historic interest it possesses, and its setting, under Section 66 – a matter the Courts have held should be afforded considerable importance and weight. Section 72, relating to Conservation Areas requires that ‘special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area’.
- 4.2 The statutory approach is reflected in Policy CP58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, adopted January 2015 (CS) and Policy 99 of the Draft Local Plan Review: Ensuring the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment which has ‘weight’ following submission to the Secretary of State in late October 2024.
- 4.3 Paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF) states that:
- In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.*
- 4.4 Paragraph 212 advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to its conservation whilst para. 208 states that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 4.5 Historic England’s *Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2* (March 2015) states that understanding the nature of significance is important for understanding the need for and

best means of conservation. Understanding the extent of that significance leads to a better understanding of how adaptable a heritage asset may be and provides the essential guide as to how policies should be applied. The following descriptive appraisal will evaluate the building against Historic England's criteria for heritage values set out in *Statements of Heritage Significance Assessing Significance in Heritage Assets* (Historic England Advice Note 12, 2019):

Archaeological interest

There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

Architectural and artistic interest

These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can rise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and the creation of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.

Historic interest

An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

- 4.6 The selection of buildings for addition to the statutory *List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest* is informed by a set of criteria set out in the revised *Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings*, (DCMS, 2018). These criteria have also been considered in this assessment.

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Designations

- 5.1 The Old Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building and so is regarded as a building of significance in a national context.
- 5.2 The Old Farmhouse is located within the Poulshot Conservation Area, a designated heritage asset.

Assessment of Significance

- 5.3 The list entry provides a clear indication as to the reason why the building was selected for designation, stating that the building was '*Included for interior features*' indicating that, if based on its external appearance, the building would probably not be listed.

Archaeological interest

- 5.4 The Old Farmhouse retains one roof truss that is of particular archaeological interest. This truss may be part of a jointed cruck, the lower part of which has been replaced when the masonry walls were built, possibly replacing timber-framing. The smoke-blackening of this truss indicates that it was part of an open hall house although the un-blackened collar to this truss raises the question whether the collar is primary or part of a reconstructed truss using older timbers. The majority of this presumably earlier roof has been replaced by simple trusses with in-line butt purlins, dating from when the eaves line was raised, possibly in the 18th century.
- 5.5 At ground floor level the sitting room has what appears to be a coffered ceiling although some of the beams are of questionable authenticity, having clear modern machine planer marks, the beam against the south-west wall has a scarfed section to reach the gable wall, there are no edge beams to the north-west and north-east, and the junction between the transverse and axial beams does not have the chamfered blocks to receive the joining timbers

as used on the two edge beams. The inconsistency in the construction of this ceiling frame raises doubts as to its originality in this building.

- 5.6 Given the fragmentary remains of the roof, and the questionable authenticity of the ceiling to the sitting room, it is considered that there is little academic justification for the use of dendrochronology to date these timbers, and the later roof structure, dating to the 18th century, is not of sufficient interest to merit dating scientifically. It is, therefore, considered that the fabric of the house has limited potential to contain archaeological information that would contribute to an improved understanding of the date and development of the building, and that the archaeological interest is at the lower end of medium at best.

Architectural and artistic interest

- 5.7 The exterior of The Old Farmhouse has been heavily modernised with rendered elevations, Roman tile roof and modern fenestration. The exterior does not allow an understanding of the possible earlier origins of the building as suggested by the smoke-blackened roof truss. The list description makes it clear that the exterior was not considered to have particular architectural interest as it specifically states that the designation of the building was based on the survival of internal features. The architectural interest of the exterior of the building is relatively low, particularly to the rear where there is a modern extension.
- 5.8 Internally, the special interest conveyed by the designation of the building based on the coffered ceiling, the fireplace, and the early roof truss is questionable when the change or reconfiguration of the ceiling frame is considered – it is evidently not a complete frame and it may be that it is constructed in partly re-used timbers. The fireplace also incorporates at least one re-used section forming the left jamb of the opening, and it is not a finely detailed depressed arch as might be expected from the list entry, but is a rather crude construction. The roof has been heavily altered – the majority is likely to be of 18th century date with one truss that is earlier, and which evidently formed part of an open hall house – but a single unexceptional truss (possibly once part of a jointed cruck) does not obviously merit the listing of the building when the extent of change is taken into account. The staircase is modern, there has been a substantial change to the central bay, there has been a complete loss of historic fenestration, and almost all internal joinery is modern. It is considered that, following a more detailed assessment than was probably possible when the building was listed, the

architectural interest of the interior is at the lower end of medium. Overall, whether this building has sufficient special architectural or historic interest to merit designation as a listed building is debateable.

Historic interest

- 5.9 The Old Farmhouse, as the name suggests, originally formed part of a farmstead group but with the loss of the working buildings, the farmstead origins are now not particularly evident. Therefore, the illustrative historic interest of the building as a farmhouse is limited.
- 5.10 The house retains some features of interest internally which allow an understanding of the historic function of the house, the fireplace and coffered ceiling indicating the relative importance of the present sitting room as the principal room. However, other than these features, there is little that contributes to the illustrative historic interest which, overall, is considered to be at the low end of medium at best.
- 5.11 On the basis of the present understanding, there are no individuals of importance at a national level linked to The Old Farmhouse, and so currently there is no associative historic interest.

PROPOSALS & ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

6.1 It is proposed to construct a single storey extension to the rear of The Old Farmhouse within the angle between the rear elevation and the modern two-storey rear extension (Figures 14 and 15). The addition will have rendered walls to match the existing building with a large glazed area to the south-east elevation providing double doors with fixed glazed lights either side. There will be a flat roof light to the roof concealed by a parapet. The extension will be open to the present kitchen within the existing modern extension, and the window to the rear wall of the dining room will be enlarged to form a door.

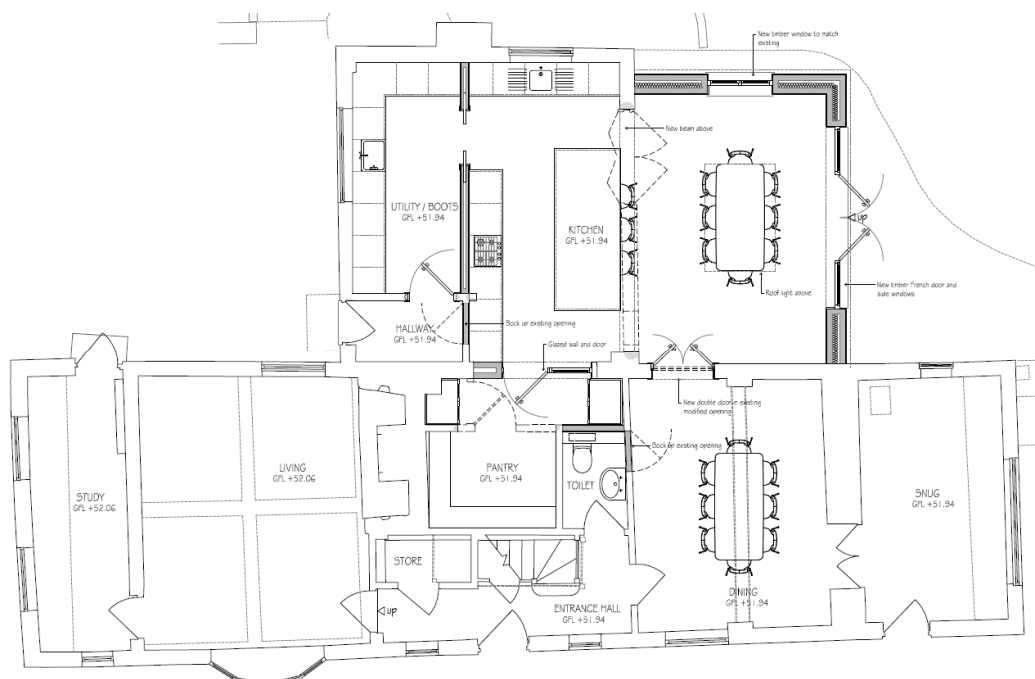


Figure 14 Proposed ground floor plan.

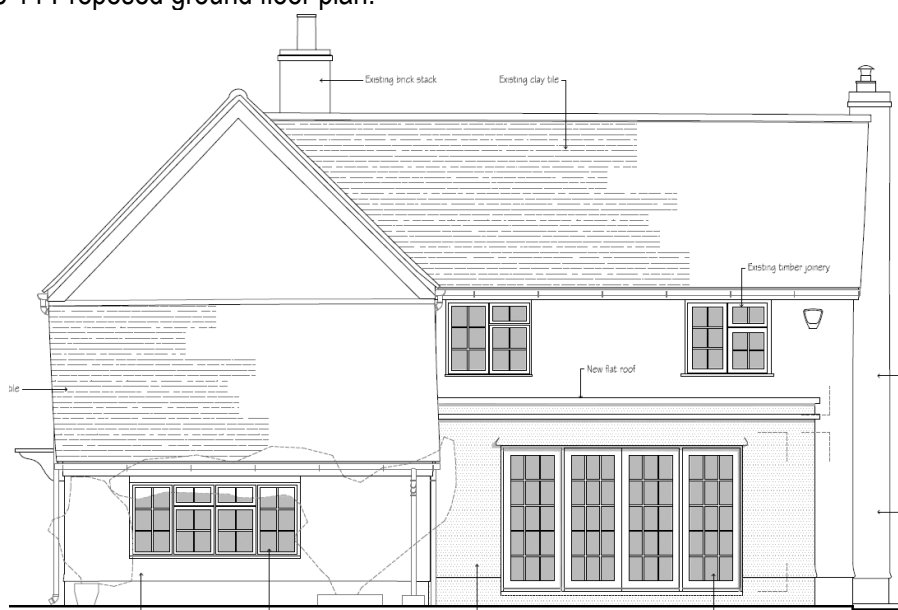


Figure 15 Proposed south-east elevation.

- 6.2 The fact that the exterior of the house was evidently not considered to merit designation as the building was specifically included in the List because of its internal features is highly relevant to the assessment of the potential impact of the proposed alteration on the significance of the listed building. Given the low level of architectural interest of the exterior, which almost wholly relates to the front elevation of the former farmhouse, it is considered that the principal of a single-storey extension to the rear of the building should be acceptable.
- 6.3 The proposed extension is a modest structure that will be clearly subservient to the host building and not harm the character of the house. Although having a parapet, the simple treatment of the parapet does not give it a classical or overly polite character that would be considered to be inappropriate for this building.
- 6.4 The opening of the flank wall of the kitchen extension relates to modern fabric of no significance. The only area of change relating to the historic element of the house is the change of a window to a door. It is notable that this window is set into a slightly recessed area which might suggest that this may have been a doorway. Even if this was not a doorway, the impact would be a relatively small area of probable 18th century brickwork which is not considered to represent a harmful change to the minimal interest of the building through loss of historic fabric as this area is not part of the 'internal features' that were considered to merit the designation of the building. The window is modern and not of significance.
- 6.5 The proposed extension will not be visible from the front of the house or from the public realm due to the extent of screening provided by the hedge to the roadside boundary and will be hidden by the two-storey extension on the glimpsed views possible from the north-west. Therefore, there will be no harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 6.6 The internal alterations mainly relate to the modern extension, but it is also proposed to form a WC within the central bay and remove the north wall of the pantry. This latter wall is a modern insertion of no heritage value. The plan form of this central bay has been heavily compromised and is not of significance. The insertion of the WC will not harm the limited special interest of the listed building.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The list description specifically states that The Old Farmhouse is designated due to the presence of internal features, presumably including the coffered ceiling and fireplace to the sitting room, and the possible upper part of a jointed cruck which is smoke-blackened suggesting that the house originated as an open hall house. The architectural quality of the exterior of the house is not of special interest, and the clear indication of where the significance of the building lies as set out in the List description is highly relevant to the assessment of the impact of the proposed extension and should be given the appropriate weight in the consideration of this application.
- 7.2 It is considered that the proposed extension to The Old Farmhouse will not cause harm to the significance or 'special architectural or historic interest' of the designated heritage asset. The minor alteration required to form the door opening will not impact upon the elements that have been identified as the reason for designation, and the small loss of possible historic fabric will not impact on the overall significance of the heritage asset.
- 7.3 The minor internal alterations primarily relate to the modern extension or modern fabric in the central bay where there has been substantial change leaving this area with little heritage significance. The changes to this area will not harm the importance of plan form.
- 7.4 The extension will not cause harm to the character and appearance of the Poulshot Conservation Area.
- 7.5 Accordingly, I can find no conflict in the proposed development with the statutory duty in Sections 66 or 72 of the Act, National Policy in the NPPF or Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, adopted January 2015 and Policy 99 of the Draft Local Plan Review and conclude that the application should be allowed.