

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

URBAN DESIGN

Officer name:

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01.12.2025 Revised drawings and documents indexed 23rd October 2025. Comment in blue below (X indicates where Reason has not been resolved or not satisfactorily resolved).

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 14th 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)

Revised drawings and documents indexed 23rd October 2025.

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 proposal remains speculative at this stage.](#)

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.
- ✓ [Reason – this matter has been partially resolved; however, current stand-off distances shown on the EPP range from approximately 2.7 metres upward, which may not meet recommended standards for hedgerow protection. As previously noted, I defer to the Landscape \[and Ecology\] Officers for confirmation of the minimum stand-off distances required to safeguard existing vegetation.](#)

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)

- ✓ [Reason – this matter has been partially resolved as stated above; however, where stand-offs are less than 5 metres suitable additional planting would be limited. I note that there is a Technical Note: Ecology Response – November 2025, and will defer to the Landscape \[and Ecology\] officer advice regarding retention of hedgerows and appropriate additional planting.](#)

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.

- ✓ Reason – this matter has been resolved; however, please note comments above regarding stand-off distances.

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

- ✗ Reason – the proposed slope is still not shown on the IM. It might be useful to show the extent of the raised land and how appropriate access for less able residents and visitors is provided to the informal play/trim trail (see note 6) below).

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.

- ✓ Reason – this matter has been resolved; however, please note comments above regarding stand-off distances.

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.

- ✗ Reason – a level difference of approximately 1.1–1.2 metres remains between the proposed site and the adjoining development at the entrance (see below).



As access is not a reserved matter, the submitted plans must clearly demonstrate how this change in level will be managed to ensure safe and seamless integration with the adjacent site, without adverse impact on its layout, for example:

The submitted plans show retaining embankments on both sides of the proposed access; however, their full extent and the design of transitional slopes for the carriageway are not illustrated. This information is essential to assess how level changes will be managed and to ensure safe integration with the adjoining development. In addition, the layout for the adjoining site has not been updated to reflect these embankments, which could affect its proposed design. Please provide updated layout drawings for both sites to demonstrate how these elements 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.
- ✓ Reason - the matter has been resolved by the removal of the swale; however, please note comments above regarding stand-off distances.

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.
- ✓ Reason – this matter has been partially resolved: trees are indicated on either side of the entrance. However, as landscaping is a reserved matter, the specification of large specimen trees must be confirmed at the Reserved Matters stage. Adequate space should also be allocated to allow these trees to mature successfully.

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).
- ✗ Reason - this matter has been only partially resolved with a new main route alignment. Please refer to the comments on the Building for a Healthy Life (BfHL) assessment below for further guidance.
- 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.
- ✗ Reason – as layout is reserved, this would likely be a matter for a future RM application. However, at this stage it would be useful to show how safe, step-free access will be achieved for all users, including those with limited mobility, to the informal play and trim trail.

- 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.

✓ Reason – the matter has been resolved.

- 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.

✗ Reason – the current buffer distance is approximately 2.7 metres, which falls short of the suggested minimum of 5 metres typically required to safeguard existing hedgerows. Final mitigation measures should be confirmed by the Landscape [and Ecology] Officer to ensure compliance with relevant guidance.

- 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).

As layout is reserved, this would likely be a matter a future RM application. However, at this stage the development proposals should ensure that the required amenity provision is deliverable.

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.

Parameters Plans are required to steer future RM applications

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.

The DAS Addendum now includes a BfHL assessment. This represents an initial step in reviewing the design proposals, and the following section - using the red, amber and green traffic light system - provides preliminary responses for further consideration.

- ✓ Natural connections - To achieve better connectivity and permeability in line with BfHL principles, the internal street network should preferably provide a vehicular through-route linking back to Gregor Drive. This would support natural movement patterns and reduce reliance on cul-de-sac layouts. While a pedestrian and cycle connection has been included, consideration should be given to whether this sufficiently meets the objectives for integrated movement and accessibility.
- ✓ Walking cycling and public transport - the current street layout results in a cul-de-sac design with a prominent turning head. This approach conflicts with BfHL principles. Consider redesigning the main route to improve place shaping to better align with BfHL guidance and the comments in 'Well defined streets and spaces' below.
- ✓ Facilities and services - the site is located on the edge of Calne (and across Gregor Drive) and beyond the 800 metres walking distance to key local facilities recommended by the Urban Design Compendium Volume 1, and where *'accessibility should be measured as distances that are actually travelled rather than 'as the crow flies'.*' (FiT). However, it is within acceptable walking distance of a local shop (circa 400 metres) and the local centre that will be provided as part of planning application ref: PL/2023/10421 (circa 250 metres).
- ✓ Homes for everyone - the current layout predominantly features detached dwellings, which raises concerns about compliance with policy objectives for mixed and inclusive communities (e.g., WP57 and BfHL principles). To address this, the development proposals could show small clusters or terraces of buildings, to reflect future diversity and inclusivity.
- ✓ Making the most of what's there - the Illustrative Masterplan currently shows building footprints positioned side-on to the entrance, ecological corridors, and public realm, rather than fronting these key features. This approach may reduce opportunities for natural surveillance, active frontages, and a stronger sense of place. At the Reserved Matters stage, the design should ensure dwellings face these areas to enhance visual connection, safety, and integration with green infrastructure.
- ✗ A memorable character – The proposed character areas lack clear differentiation in terms of layout, scale, and architectural treatment. CA2 appears to have a lower density than CA1, with fewer dwellings and wider spacing, but this distinction contradicts the expressed design approach in the DAS.

To reinforce local identity, materials and architectural detailing should align with WDG principles. Stone is the predominant material in the region, and the use of buff brick is not characteristic of central Wiltshire (WDG para 3.1.10). Buff brick should therefore be avoided as a substitute for stone to maintain visual continuity and respect local vernacular.

- ✗ Well defined streets and spaces – the current layout is dominated by the main route, uniform plot shapes, and standardised housing forms, reflecting a suburban model that is out of character with the site's rural setting. The previously submitted layout (ref: 381.UD.01G)

comprised a short main route leading to a courtyard character which potentially could reflect rural typologies by incorporating narrow building depths, generous front gardens, and informal farmstead-style clusters or with irregular plots. This would allow the development to integrate more sensitively with the surrounding landscape. Reference NDG page 20 (top right image) illustrates how contemporary interpretations of local rural forms can be successfully applied.

- ✓ Easy to find your way around - the site benefits from being relatively small and therefore easier to find one's way around. However, the proposed layout relies on a curvilinear cul-de-sac main route, which scores poorly against BfHL principles. Consider the advice in 'Well defined streets and spaces' above.
- ✗ Healthy streets - the reliance on an engineered approach to the main route design, means that standard highway design dominates the new development and this scores poorly against BfHL principles. Consider the advice in 'Well defined streets and spaces' above.
- ✓ Cycle and car parking - the current approach relies heavily on conventional suburban parking layouts, which may not align with the site's rural context or design objectives. To enhance place-making and reduce visual impact, alternative strategies should be considered - such as informal farmstead-style clusters, integrated courtyard parking, or shared parking courts screened by low stone walls/landscaping.
- ✓ Green and blue infrastructure – While the proposal includes a permanent water feature, swales, and permeable surfaces, consideration should be given to distributing water storage across the site through additional features such as rain gardens and small ponds. This approach would enhance biodiversity, improve surface water management, and align with the WDG principles for integrated green and blue infrastructure.
- ✓ Back of pavement front of home – in keeping with Wiltshire's vernacular character, boundary treatments should incorporate stone, reflecting traditional detailing and proportions. Prominent front boundaries should feature low stone walls to reinforce a distinctive sense of place and continuity with the surrounding context, as recommended in the WDG.