

Application reference: PL/2025/08987

I write to OBJECT to planning application PL/2025/08987. My objections are based on the following material considerations:

1. Conflict with the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 (JMNP2) — undermines plan-led development

- The JMNP2 is now “made” (adopted following referendum on 31 July 2025) and therefore carries the same statutory weight as the wider development plan for this area.
- The purpose of JMNP2 is to ensure sustainable, community-led growth by guiding where development should occur — and by protecting green spaces, countryside buffers, heritage, and local character.
- To grant permission for a development that is not aligned with the land allocations or policies in JMNP2 would undermine the very principle of a “plan-led” system. The planning system should not allow ad-hoc or speculative development that conflicts with an up-to-date Neighbourhood Plan unless there are truly exceptional material considerations.
- There is a strong precedent within the Melksham area: in recent decisions objections grounded in the Neighbourhood Plan (together with concerns over infrastructure, sustainable development, and impact on countryside/green buffers) have succeeded in achieving refusals.

Because PL/2025/08957 appears to sit outside the allocations or accepted policies of JMNP2, it conflicts with the development plan. Accordingly, the application should be refused.

2. Loss of countryside / green space and erosion of local character & identity

- A key objective of JMNP2 is to protect green spaces, countryside between villages and the town, and maintain the distinct identity of villages and the town, preventing uncontrolled sprawl or merging of settlements.
- Approving a new development where none is allocated would erode those countryside buffers/green gaps, damaging the character and identity of the local area.
- Additionally, the loss of open land has environmental impacts — reducing biodiversity, tree cover, green corridors, and the natural environment which JMNP2 aims to safeguard through bespoke policies (e.g. for natural environment, sustainable design, flood risk, tree coverage).

This makes the application contrary to the local plan’s objectives for sustainable development and environmental protection.

3. Infrastructure, sustainability, and public services concerns

- Recent refusals of other developments in Melksham have cited insufficient provision of necessary on-site or off-site infrastructure (school capacity, medical facilities, roads, community services) as material grounds for refusal — often where housing was being proposed outside the Neighbourhood Plan’s allocations.
- There is a risk that this proposal will exacerbate existing pressures on infrastructure: schools, health services, roads/traffic, community facilities. Without a robust plan for

infrastructure and public services accompanying the development, the scheme is unsustainable.

- The community's own Neighbourhood Plan was drawn up precisely to match housing needs with sustainable delivery of infrastructure and protect from speculative over-development. Granting permission now would ignore that fundamental linkage.

4. Precedent and cumulative impact — undermining planning certainty

- If this application were allowed despite its conflict with JMNP2, it would set a dangerous precedent: developers could bypass the Neighbourhood Plan, thereby undermining the whole local democratic planning process and community expectations.
- Over time, this could lead to piecemeal, unplanned development, loss of green gaps, increased pressure on infrastructure and services, and erosion of the local environment and character.
- That outcome is directly contrary to the intention behind neighbourhood planning — to give local people control, clarity and certainty over where and how development should take place.

5. On material planning grounds: landscape, environmental, infrastructure, design and sustainability

Even putting aside the conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan, there are a number of material considerations that weigh strongly against this development:

- The impact on landscape character, countryside, and rural setting (loss of greenfield land / open countryside).
- Potential harm to local biodiversity, natural environment, tree cover, water courses or wildlife habitats (unless robust ecological assessments and mitigation are provided). Lack of sufficient evidence of ecological mitigation could justify refusal.
- Traffic, highway safety, noise or light pollution, especially if local roads are inadequate for increased volume — affecting local amenity and safety.
- Overdevelopment relative to local services and infrastructure capacity (schools, healthcare, transport links, community facilities), undermining sustainable development.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above — notably the clear conflict with the made Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2; the loss of countryside, green space and local character; inadequacy of infrastructure; and broader environmental, landscape, traffic and sustainability impacts — I strongly object to planning application PL/2025/08987.

In my view, granting permission would undermine community-led planning, set a damaging precedent, and be contrary to both local and national planning policy. I urge Wiltshire Council to refuse this application.