



PL/2025/08987, Land at First Lane, Whitley, SN12 8RL, outline planning application with all matters reserved except for access for the erection of 2 No. self-build plots and associated works.

CAWS strongly objects for the following reasons.

Housing Numbers

This site is not allocated in the made Neighbourhood Plan.

The housing allocations in the made Neighbourhood Plan, together with other commitments and completions, will deliver more houses in Shaw and Whitley than expected by the draft Local Plan.

This development is therefore speculative and unnecessary and should be refused.

Settlement Boundary

Shaw and Whitley are collectively categorised as a Large Village for planning purposes.

There is therefore a Settlement Boundary around Whitley and Shaw and proposed development is clearly outside it.

As the development is outside the Settlement Boundary the application should be refused.

Rural Gap

The site occupies a Rural Gap in the made Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2.

Policy 19 of that plan applies.

Development of this site would:

- a. not be in conformity with development plan policies;
- b. erode the separation gap between Shaw and Whitley;
- c. increase the burden on infrastructure;
- d. provide no demonstrable economic, environmental or community benefit;
- e. increase the impact of urban effects such as artificial lighting and traffic movements.

The application should therefore be refused.

Flooding

The South Brook catchment area has been identified as a priority flood risk area by the Environment Agency and Wiltshire Council.

The area is frequently the subject of Flood Alerts, the most recent of which was yesterday.

There have been many significant floods in the exact area of this proposed site including 2011 and 2014, but each year the area floods.

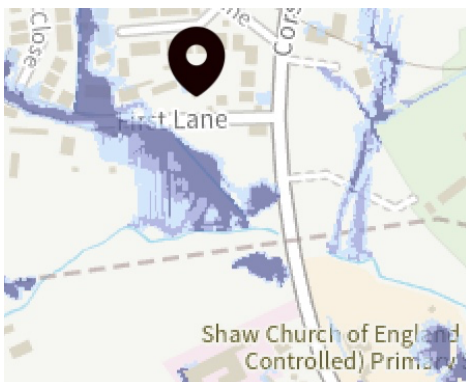
The following picture was taken on 4 January 2024 and shows the gate to the site and the road under water.



The governments flood risk summary confirms the existing risk and shows that the issue will grow as a problem. The first map from that site shows the current risk on the plot in question. The second map shows how water risk will extend between 2040 and 2060.



The current surface water risk



The surface water risk between 2040 and 2060.

There is also an issue with the Wessex Water sewerage system in this area. On 16/17 November 2025 during a storm, there was so much water in the drains that sewerage from properties on the east side of the road, such as No 119 First Lane, was not passing into the main sewer. This was then backing up putting those properties at imminent risk.

The proposed design will leave the parcel of land behind the site inaccessible. This is unacceptable as ongoing access is required to maintain the ditch that flows into South Brook. Also note that Lagard House and others have access rights to the land for the purpose of maintenance to hedges and drains etc.; the design appears to prevent such access and is therefore unacceptable.

It is not clear who will have the responsibility for ongoing maintenance of the ditch. We assume liability will continue to sit with the landowner.

The drainage assets in the immediate area of the site are reviewed regularly. The following picture of such a review was taken on 14 August 2025. Note the area of investigation by the tanker is adjacent to the site entrance.



The proposed new stream will run along the boundary of Lagard House. Given the extant flood risk in this area this proposed attenuation and the impact on residents is unacceptable. This attenuation will also have a heritage impact (see below).

Development of this site, despite the proposed attenuation and any remedial works by Wessex Water, will exacerbate flood risks in Whitley, Shaw and downstream to Melksham and the application should therefore be refused.

Traffic

First Lane is narrow in places and used twice daily as parking for “school run” traffic for Shaw primary school.

The road in this area is often very congested and sometimes gridlocked, especially when a bus passes.

The following picture was taken on 17 July 2025 and shows typical congestion by the entrance to the site.



An increase in the volume of traffic generated by the proposed development will exacerbate traffic conditions in the immediate area. Residents are concerned about additional residential traffic (regardless of volume) and the impact of construction logistics especially given the high number of other schemes in the area including cable works, renewable energy schemes, BESS construction, works at Melksham Substation and other residential schemes etc.

The application should therefore be refused on the grounds of a risk to additional traffic volume on a rural lane without capacity for growth.

Impact on Heritage Assets

There are three Grade 2 listed properties in very close proximity to the site. These are:

- a) Lagard House
- b) 120 First Lane
- c) The Malt House

These are all around 100m from the proposed development.

The proposed development would have a real impact on the setting of those listed assets as well as changing the character of this part of the village.

The application should therefore be refused on heritage grounds.

Housing Growth

Residents are concerned about the adjoining land which, if this application were to be approved, would be inaccessible. Concerns have been expressed about any future application regarding this second plot and the cumulative impact such a scheme would have on the area. Whilst that is a separate matter, it is a relevant point for the community who are concerned about future development enabled by precedent.

Previous Planning Applications

All material objections to a previous planning application (PL/2021/06922) are, in principle, extant, and should be considered relevant for this application.

2 December 2025