

Melksham Without Parish Council object to PL/2025/08987 – Land at First Lane, Whitley for the following reasons:

- In 2021, PL/2021/06922 for the same location (for 4 dwellings) was refused. Members believe that the refusal reasons for that application apply to the current application, namely:
 - The application is considered to be an inappropriate, unsustainable form of development which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefit of providing additional dwellings in an open countryside location and the provision of employment created through construction processes. As such the proposal is not considered to represent sustainable development.
 - The proposed development located in the open countryside would detract from the rural character of the area, would result in the urbanisation of the rural landscape and would allow development to encroach upon the northern boundary of Shaw resulting in increasing coalescence between the settlements of Shaw and Whitley.
 - It is considered there is insufficient information to determine whether the applicant's drainage strategy would not lead to flooding on site or harmful levels of surface water runoff from the site.
- For Shaw & Whitley, the emerging Local Plan requires approx. 70/73 dwellings. Currently, there are 75 dwellings with planning permission, built already, pending a planning decision, and an estimate based on all the evidence in the Reg 14 A and Reg 14 B consultations for the Whitley Farm site allocation in the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 (listed below). The parish council believe that these planned numbers are more than sufficient to meet the needs of the community and speculative developments, such as this one, need not, and should not, be considered at this time.

Site	Planning Application	Number of Dwellings	Status as at 3/10/25
Middle Farm Site Allocation in adopted NHP2 (55 dwellings)		55	NHP2 made 4 th August 2025
Whitley Farm NP2 (number is approximate)	Conservation led redevelopment of redundant modern agricultural buildings and barns and conservation and reuse of Grade II listed Whitley Farm barn 10 & 15 dwellings in Reg 14 versions of the NHP and viability report in NHP evidence base, but no	10	NHP2 made 4 th August 2025

	actual housing number in NHP2 https://www.melkshamneighbourhoodplan.org/files/ugd/c4c117_67500181f96c450fab9633b614ac5f6f.pdf		
Land Adjacent 1 Eden Grove, Whitley	PL/2023/00625	1	Built
39 Eden Grove, Whitley	21/01791/FUL	2	Built
178 Top Lane, Whitley	20/04234/FUL	1	Built
89 Corsham Road, Whitley	PL/2025/03261	1	Approved 01/7/25
Mavern House, Corsham Road, Shaw	2024/00631	1	Approved
Home Farm, Shaw	PL/2025/00965	2	Awaiting decision
Land South East of Poplar Farm, Shaw	20/11342/FUL	1	Approved
26 Shaw Hill	PL/2023/06990	1	Approved
	Total	75	

- The development as proposed, would materially conflict with the Council's strategic core policies CP1, CP2 and CP15 of the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy, by virtue of the site not being allocated for housing and being located outside settlement limits, as well as significantly and demonstrably conflicting with the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 2020-2038, which allocates other land for housing (as made on 4 August 2025) and that the benefits of the development would not outweigh the aforesaid Plan conflicts.
- The proposal would materially erode a green buffer that is important to and distinguishes the villages of Whitley and Shaw. The proposed site, being outside the defined settlement limits of Whitley and Shaw, would adversely affect the character and appearance of the local area through the urbanisation of this green buffer, which is considered important to preserve the individual village identities. The proposal is contrary to Core Policy 51 of the adopted WCS and Policy 19 – Separation of Settlements of the made Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 2020-2038, requires proposals to conserve and respect the separate identity of these village settlements.

- 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 and 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 proposed new stream, for flood mitigation, will run along the north edge of the site adjacent to the boundary of Lagard House. Given the existing flood risk in this area this proposed attenuation and the impact on residents is unacceptable. This attenuation will also have a heritage impact.
- 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. 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.
- 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 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