

APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION

CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2025/09100
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full Planning Permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Sahara Sandpit, Sandridge Hill, Melksham, SN12 7QX
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Erection of an additional silo
RECOMMENDATION:	Consent be GRANTED

PROPOSAL

This application is requesting permission for the erection of a cement silo measuring no higher than 14m, no wider than 3.7m and no deeper than 4.7m. The silo will be of steel construction, painted in a colour yet to be determined, and will include external ladders.

Notwithstanding the overall mass of the structure, the footprint which will be impacted by the development is less than 25m² and, as such, the scheme has been notified as being exempt from biodiversity net gain (BNG) requirements.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a section of a site used in association with a concrete processing operation; the area proposed for the erection of a silo is directly south of an existing retaining wall which separates the rural business site from undeveloped grassland. The site and wider area are part of an authorised landfill site (Sahara Ltd) and there is some potential for contaminated land.

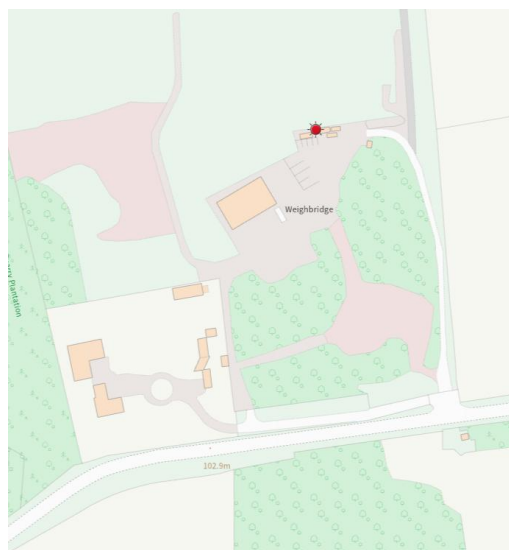


Figure 1: map view of site (red)



Figure 2: aerial view of site and wider business



Figure 3: access from A3102 (google 2025)

The site is not listed, within a conservation area, national landscape area, or an ecologically sensitive area; and, whilst the site and wider area have been identified at a strategic level by Natural England as having an Agricultural Land Classification of Grade 2 (consequently considered to be best and most versatile agricultural land), the area proposed for the silo is developed and not used for agricultural purposes.

The site is identified by the Environment Agency as being within flood zone 1, at the lowest risk of flooding from rivers and seas and was not identified (within the Councils Strategic Flood Risk Assessment) as being at high risk of flooding from surface or groundwater.

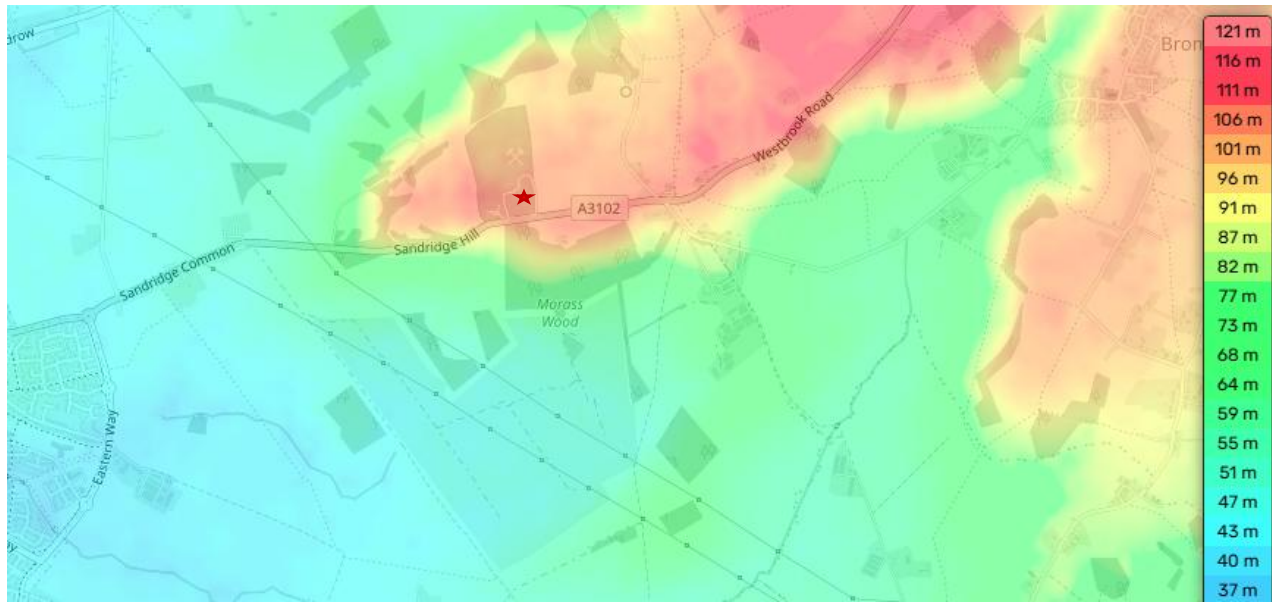


Figure 4: topography of approximate site area (red *) and wider setting

The site is accessed via an existing private track connected (at the south) to classified A3102; the area for development cannot, however, be viewed from this publicly accessible location by virtue of existing natural planting. The site is at a higher elevation than the town of Melksham (to the west) and the land continues to rise to the east which results in some long-distance view of the site from Westbrook Road and connected unclassified lanes including 'Sandridge Lane' which runs parallel (over 350m east) to the site, separated by undeveloped fields.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Recent, relevant planning history at the site: (inter alia)

- 18/09462/FUL granted permission for *Low level 'minim mix' mobile concrete plant [...]* on 19.02.2019
 - o PL/2025/09849 requesting a *non-material amendment to 18/09462/FUL [...]* was received on 17.12.2025 and made to regularise a breach in association with the layout. At the time of writing the application is pending determination.

Recent, relevant planning history associated with the wider site (inter alia)

- W/07/09010WCM granted permission for the *importation of inert filling material to aid restoration of sand pit without compliance with condition 01 of planning permission 05/09021* on 08.08.2007
 - o 19/10925/WCM *Application to vary condition 3 appended to consented application 14/07457/WCM to allow a 24 month extension to complete the restoration of the site* was approved on 07.04.2020

Recent, relevant planning history associated with the wider setting

None

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Though considered as a whole, applicable Development Plan policies are listed below along with relevant legislation and guidance.

Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)

- CP1: Settlement Strategy
- CP2: Delivery Strategy
- CP15: Spatial Strategy for the Melksham Community Area
- CP50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- CP57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping

Saved Policies of the West Wiltshire Local Plan (WWLP)

Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 (NDP)

- Policy 1: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy 10: Employment Sites
- Policy 13: Biodiversity
- Policy 20: Locally Distinctive, High Quality Design

Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP4)

- Parking standards (LTP3)

Wiltshire Design Guide (WDG)

Wiltshire Council Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)

ISSUES

The main issues in the consideration of this application are:

- Principle / Sustainable Development
- Design and Neighbouring Amenity
- Biodiversity

CONSULTATION

Melksham Without Parish Council: Support

In line with Policy 10 - Employment Sites of Melksham Neighbourhood Plan, Melksham Without Parish Council support this development which proposes intensification of activities on previously developed employment land and hope that this leads to business growth and new employment opportunities

At the time of writing, no representation has been received from the Councils Public Protection Team or Landscape Team.

REPRESENTATIONS

At the time of writing no public representations have been received.

ASSESSMENT

Principle / Sustainable development

CP1 and CP2 of the WCS relate to the spatial strategy for Wiltshire, setting the policy foundations for sustainable development within the county. CP15 of the WCS expresses that development in the Melksham Community Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Strategy set out in CP1.

Development in connection with the existing use of the site is established in principle. Matters relating to design etc. are addressed below.

Design and Neighbouring Amenity

Policy CP57 of the WCS requires high quality design and place shaping for all new development including alterations.

The application has been submitted with a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which provides assessment and mitigation recommendations. Consultation with the Councils Landscape Team has been carried out and whilst no representation has been received, there has been sufficient information provided to allow for Officer assessment of the scheme.

The silo, whilst large, is functional in appearance and considered to be necessary to ensure the continued use of the site; the development will not alter the established character of the site in short-range views and any potential visibility from long-range views will be seen in context with the existing site. The scale of the development is not so large as to result in unacceptable changes to visual amenity.

The site has some potential for contaminated land and whilst no report addressing this point has been provided as part of the application submission consultation with the councils Public Protection Team has been carried out. Unfortunately, no representation has been received from the Public Protection team; however, taking into account that previous planning applications at the site did not require submission of further information relating to contaminated land, that the silo being proposed under this application will be used in association with the existing activities at the site (with no change of use proposed), and that the scheme does not require significant groundworks, it is considered that sufficient information has been provided to allow for Officer assessment of the scheme.

Taking into account the above, there is no evidence to suggest that the proposed development will result in an increased risk to human health or the environment beyond the existing situation; therefore, on this occasion, no contaminated land assessment has been requested and no conditions relating to contaminated land matters are considered necessary.

Furthermore, the site is in a fairly isolated position, sufficiently distanced from residential units and PRoWs to such a degree that it is considered unlikely that the development will result in an unacceptable change to the level of noise or nuisance to members of the public.

Visual impact mitigation measures recommended within the LVIA include:

- *Silos to be painted in subdued matt woodland tones*
- *Reflective / clashing finishes or incongruous branding to be avoided*
- *Operational lighting will be limited to low level [...]*

These mitigation measures are considered reasonable and necessary; consequently, the LVIA will be included as part of any approved plans condition.

Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Trees

Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is a way of creating and improving natural habitats and ensures that development has a measurably positive impact on biodiversity, compared to what was there before development.

Policy CP50 of the WCS outlines that Wiltshire's natural environment is one of its greatest assets and identifies protection measures necessary for consideration when assessing the impact of development on biodiversity and geodiversity.

Criteria (ii) of Policy CP57 of the WCS encourages development to include:

- (ii) the retention and enhancement of existing important landscaping and natural features (e.g. trees, hedges, banks and watercourses), to take opportunities to enhance biodiversity, create wildlife and recreational corridors, effectively integrate the development into its setting and to justify and mitigate against any losses that may occur through the development.

The existing site situation is such that there will be no removal of (or impact on) trees or hedgerows. Notwithstanding the overall massing of the silo, development will not impact more than 25m² of habitat and as such the applicant has stated that the development is exempt from BNG.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The scheme meets the aims of policies contained within the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Development Plan. The scheme is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

- The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

Location plan; 3436-4-1 DR-0001; received 17.11.2025

Proposed site plan; 3436-4-1 DR-0003; received, 25.11.2025

Silo elevations; 3436-4-1 DR-0004; received 17.11.2025

Development Mitigation recommendations within 'Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' prepared by David Jarvis Associates, dated 14.11.2025

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

INFORMATIVES TO APPLICANT:

- The applicant is requested to note that this permission does not affect any private property rights and therefore does not authorise the carrying out of any work on land outside their control. If such works are required, it will be necessary for the applicant to obtain the landowners consent before such works commence.

If you intend carrying out works in the vicinity of the site boundary, you are also advised that it may be expedient to seek your own advice regarding the requirements of the Party Wall Act 1996.

- Any alterations to the approved plans, brought about by compliance with Building Regulations or any other reason must first be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority before commencement of work.
- The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition (biodiversity gain condition) that development may not begin unless:
 - (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
 - (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan, if one is required in respect of this permission would be Wiltshire Council. There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. For further information on exempt developments please refer to:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because one or more of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements is considered to apply.