

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Application No: PL/2025/06396
Demolition of existing dwelling, erection of two detached dwellings and associated works.
Marshfield, 85 High Street, Great Cheverell, Devizes, SN10 5XR

Please find following comments in respect of the above application(s).

Recommendations:

☐	No comment
☐	Support in principle subject to amendments to the scheme (as set out below)
☐	Support subject to conditions (as set out below)
☐	Object (for reasons set out below)
☐	No objections

Scope of comments: the following comments relate to the built historic environment.

Policy: From the point of view of the historic environment the main statutory tests are set out within the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 66 requires that **special regard** be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 also requires the Council to pay **special attention** to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of designated Conservation Areas.

The NPPF outlines government policy, including its policy in respect of the historic environment. Section 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development. Paragraphs 214-216 of the NPPF require a balanced approach with any harm which would be caused being weighed against the potential public benefits which might be achieved. Paragraph 210 requires local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

National Planning Practice Guidance provides guidance on interpreting the NPPF.

The Council's Core Strategy Policy CP58 'Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment' requires that "designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance."

The Council's Core Strategy CP 57: Ensuring high quality design requires a high quality of design in all new developments. Proposals are required to "demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through (amongst other things) "enhancing local distinctiveness by responding to the value of the natural and historic environment, relating positively to its landscape setting and the existing pattern of development" and "responding positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting."

Historic England Advice Note 2 – Making changes to Heritage Assets illustrates the application of policies set out in the NPPF in determining applications for PP and LBC.

Site and assets considered: The site comprises of a detached modern bungalow (no. 85 High Street) erected on the steeply rising north bank of an early sunken lane. The site is located in Great Cheverell Conservation Area and adjacent to listed buildings.

Proposal: The proposal seeks the demolition of the existing dwelling and the erection of two detached dwellings and associated works.

Relevant planning history: 18/08383/FUL - Proposed new access and temporary mobile home. Engineering operations to construct a new driveway including parking spaces and turning area. (approve); 19/00654/PREAPP - Demolition of existing bungalow and redevelopment; 19/11356/FUL - Demolition of existing bungalow and erection of 3 new bungalows (refuse and appeal dismissed); PL/2022/09110 - Demolition of existing bungalow and erection of 2 bungalows (refusal); PL/2025/04841 - Lawful development certificate for a proposed single storey rear extension, outbuildings and permeable hard standing.

Issues: impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings, impact on the conservation area.

Information considered/provided: Paragraph 207 requires that applicants describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. This should include sufficient information to provide a clear understanding of the significance of the heritage asset and its setting and the potential impact of any proposals on that significance. In this case, the application is accompanied by a "Heritage Statement" which provides sufficient information to understand the impact of the proposals and is proportionate to their scope. The requirements of the NPPF are therefore met in this respect.

However, paragraph 208 also provides for the local planning authority to make its own assessment of impact and the following heritage recommendations are offered on this basis.

Significance of assets and contribution of setting: The NPPF defines significance as the "value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be **archaeological**, **architectural**, **artistic** or **historic**. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting." Historic England assesses

significance in a similar manner, referring to evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values of a place.

In this case the significance of the heritage assets in the area is derived primarily from their architectural, historic, archaeological, and in some cases communal values, as well as the contribution made by their settings. The wider green verdant setting also contributes to the origins of the settlement and the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Assessment: The first issue to consider is loss of the existing building and the impact this would have on the significance of the conservation area. The existing bungalow was built in the 20th century. It is located on rising ground and no doubt designed as single storey to appear as a similar height to the properties on the lower ground on the other side of the high street. In terms of the architectural importance of the house itself this is not of such quality that its loss would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area, so its loss is likely to be acceptable.

The key issue would be the impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The Historic England guidance on Making changes to Heritage Assets states that the main issues to consider in assessing new development in conservation areas are proportion, height, massing, bulk, use of materials, durability and adaptability, use, enclosure, relationship with adjacent assets and definition of spaces and streets, alignment, active frontages, permeability and treatment of setting. This is also reflected in policy C57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy which emphasises the need to enhance local distinctiveness by relating positively to its landscape setting, the existing pattern of development and responding to the local topography.

This part of the village was open until the 20th century and was part of the rural character of the village. The building of the existing bungalow did have some impact on the rural character but at least the large garden maintained the sense of openness and greenery. Paragraph 219 of the NPPF states that Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areato enhance or better reveal their significance. Part of the significance of this site was the fact it was the site of the village ponds and connected with the wider landscape beyond. This proposals for 2 bungalows plus large area of car parking and access shows an intensification of built form and I am of the view that this will have an adverse impact on the area as the sense of green space in the centre of the village.

The two bungalows would be unduly suburban with a mock tudor vernacular. This would be out of keeping with the vernacular building forms in the conservation area and would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the street scene and the setting of the listed building situated opposite. Far greater emphasis needs to be given to the design of the residential units since this needs to knit back the enclosure of the street scene with buildings of a positive contribution which are of high quality and contribute to a sense of place.

The central position of the unduly wide driveways and their heavily engineered appearance and retaining walls would also detract from the current verdant green character of the site and the character and appearance of the conservation area.

I am also concerned at the loss of a 'significant tree' on the plot as shown in the Great Cheverell Conservation Area Appraisal. Trees in conservation areas are protected and as such their removal is rarely supported where they make a positive contribution to the character and appearance.

Summary & conclusion: The NPPF confirms that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). It makes clear that any harm to a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification.

The proposals will result in harm to the setting of the listed building and the character and appearance of the conservation area through a poor design that would be dominated by an over engineered access, retaining walls, and built form that is unduly suburban with a mock tudor vernacular. The proposals involve only part of the conservation area and the setting of the listed building and therefore could be considered as causing 'less than substantial harm' for the purposes of interpreting the NPPF. However, the wording of the NPPF and the 'special regard' by Section 66 and 'special attention' by Section 72 of the Act requires that any level harm caused should be taken seriously.

As a result, the proposals fail to meet with the requirements of current conservation legislation, policy or guidance and I therefore recommend refusal.