

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Officer's Name: Andrew Thomas
Officer's Title: Planning Officer

Application No: PL/2026/00028
Part demolition of existing buildings and erection of two self-build dwellings (use class C3) including parking, landscaping and associated works.
Land adjacent 36, Bath Road, Bradford on Avon, BA15 1SR

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

Recommendations:

☒	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."

Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy Policy CP57 'Ensuring high quality design and place shaping': A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality.

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 lies at the north edge of Bradford on Avon, close to the boundary of Bradford on Avon Conservation Area and adjacent to a Grade II Listed Building, 35 Bath Road.

Proposal: The proposal seeks part demolition of existing buildings and erection of two self-build dwellings (use class C3) including parking, landscaping and associated works.

Relevant planning history: 20/06975/FUL - Redevelopment of Land adjacent to 36 Bath Road to provide 4 x 2 Bedroom Residential Dwellings (withdrawn); 18/03381/PREAPP - Redevelopment to provide 5 dwellings.

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 Assessment" 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 site lies in its former agricultural origins and links to a surviving past and origins to the settlement including the presence of the surviving farm buildings. Barn A (open cart shed) in particular makes a contribution to the setting of the heritage assets.

Assessment: The site lies at the north edge of Bradford on Avon, close to the boundary of Bradford on Avon Conservation Area and adjacent to a Grade II Listed Building, 35 Bath Road.

It was mainly used as agricultural land since the 1840's, with some of the older stone buildings dating from the late 19th century.

This site contains three historic buildings that are considered to be non-designated heritage assets. The extant buildings on the Site are in a poor state of repair and are currently in use as commercial garaging and storage.

The proposal seeks the demolition of the majority of extant buildings on the site, the alteration and partial demolition of Building A (altered by removing one bay at the east end, where the building currently directly addresses Bath Road and the construction of two self-build residential units.

The proposed new dwellings would be two storeys in height, with principal elevations facing north-east towards the access on Bath Road. They would be constructed of traditional Cotswold stone with gabled roof structures covered in pantiles, and would feature design elements such as dormer windows, dressed stone window surrounds and cills, and glazed entrances sheltered by overhanging canopies.

Any experience of the Listed Building from within the site is essentially non-existent due to the house at 36 Bath Road and intervening boundary screening, and the orientation of the Building is to the east, rather than northwards towards the site.

In regard to impact on the significance of the conservation area, the site is located c. 30m north of the Conservation Area boundary. The proposed demolition of the existing buildings (with the exception of Building A) would alter the character of the site from one that appears semi-agricultural in character due to the presence of the former farm buildings, to a residential development. This would effect a change to part of the historical agricultural surroundings of the Conservation Area through the removal of a group of buildings that maintain a semblance of the historic Lower Bearfield Farm.

My main conservation concern relates to the alteration of Building A which is prominent in both the street scene and in views towards the conservation area. The reduction of the length of this NDHA is not fully justified and there appears to be scope to amend the vision splays into the site so to retain this structure intact. I also consider that the stone boundary wall along Bath Road which encloses the site make a positive contribution and this could continue in its proposed form springing from the side of the existing building. As such I am requesting amendment.

Subject to this amendment, I consider that the proposal would result in a change of use of the site from former agricultural use to a domestic enclave. This change would have a slight impact on the ability to understand and appreciate the historical functional associations and character of the Conservation Area's northern boundary. This would be manifested through changes to views both from the northern boundary of the Conservation Area and views towards the Conservation Area on approach along Bath Road, where presently the Site is visible.

Providing that the cattle shed were to be retained in full, the degree of impact would be very limited, and less than substantial harm at the lower end, to the significance of the heritage assets. In my view this level of harm would be outweighed by the public benefits, particular the repair to the cattle shed and providing this building with a new long term viable use.

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.

As such amendments are requested to Building A.