

APPLICATION FOR FULL-PLANNING PERMISSION CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2025/09642
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Hayes Oak Farm, Hayes Knoll, Purton Stoke, Swindon, SN5 4JL
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Construction of an Agricultural Building to house an existing farmyard manure store
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve with Conditions

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The application site is located at Hayes Oak Farm, Hayes Knoll, Purton Stoke. The site forms part of an established agricultural holding comprising approximately 480 acres of mixed pasture and arable land used for cattle rearing. The specific development area measures 810 m² and currently accommodates an open farmyard manure store on a concrete base, surrounded by soil bunds. The site lies within an existing farmstead and is accessed via an established vehicular entrance from the public highway.

The surrounding landscape is rural in character, dominated by agricultural fields and farm buildings. There are no designated sites or priority habitats, nor any designated heritage assets within 500 m of the site. The site is within Flood Zone 1 and is not within 20 m of a watercourse. The closest Public Rights of Way (PRoW) are PURT29, located 250m south west, and Bridleway CRIC16, 350m North.

PROPOSAL

This proposal seeks full planning permission for the erection of a steel-framed agricultural building to cover the existing farmyard manure store. (The development is under application to comply with DEFRA Countryside Stewardship funding conditions aimed at reducing water pollution from manure runoff.) The proposal would utilise existing farm access. The building would measure 30 m x 27 m footprint, with a ridge height of 10 m. The material would include a Steel portal frame with grey fibre-cement roof sheeting and six m-high concrete panels on three elevations: an open south elevation for access, covering 810 m². The proposal includes Rainwater Harvesting Tanks to capture roof surface run off.

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
14/05729/APD - Agricultural & Forestry - Detailed matters Decision - Prior Approval Not Required Date: 24/6/2014 – Agricultural Storage Barn
N/07/02454/AGN - Agricultural & Forestry - Detailed matters Decision - Permitted Development Date: 1/10/2007 – Extension of Existing Agricultural Building
N/98/01767/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Unknown Date: 17/9/1998 – ERECTION OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDING (REVISION OF N.95.0763.F) AGRICULTURAL BUILDING

N/95/00763/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approved Date: 19/6/1995 – ERECTION OF PORTAL FRAME LIVESTOCK BUILDING FOLLOWING DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDING (AMENDMENT TO N/94/1779/F) PORTAL FRAME LIVESTOCK BLDG

N/94/01779/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approved Date: 12/10/1994 – ERECTION OF PORTAL FRAME LIVESTOCK BUILDING FOLLOWING DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDING LIVESTOCK BUILDING

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Statutory Legislation:

National Planning Policy:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- National Design Guide

Development Plan:

The development plan for Wiltshire comprises the *Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)* (adopted January 2015) and any made neighbourhood plans, which remains the principal statutory planning document guiding development across the county. In line with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Though the development plan is considered as a whole, those parts deemed to be particularly relevant to this application are listed below:

The adopted *Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)*, with particular regard to:

- Core Policy 1 Settlement Strategy;
- Core Policy 2 Delivery Strategy;
- Core Policy 3 Infrastructure Requirements;
- Core Policy 19 Spatial Strategy Royal Wootton Bassett Community Area
- Core Policy 35 Existing Employment Land
- Core Policy 48 Supporting Rural Life
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Core Policy 51 Landscape
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 67 Flood Risk;

Draft Wiltshire Local Plan Policies

- Policy 1: Settlement Strategy
- Policy 2: Delivery Strategy
- Policies 44- 51: Swindon Area Strategy
- Policies 64 – 75: Economic, tourism, retail and transport
- Policies 85 – 101: Sustainability, ecology, water and landscape, heritage, air quality

Neighbourhood Plan:

Purton Neighbourhood Plan 2017 to 2026. Made November 2018

Supplementary Planning Documents and other Guidance:

- Wiltshire Design Guide (adopted April 2024)
- A Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Wiltshire: Wiltshire's Natural Environment Plan 2022-2030

ISSUES

The main issues that need to be addressed in this case include:

- Whether the development is acceptable in principle (CP 1 and 2)
- Whether the scheme constitutes high quality design (CP 57)
- Whether the scheme would have an acceptable impact upon the reasonable living conditions of the adjoining occupants (CP 57)
- Whether the scheme would preserve or enhance the historic environment (CP 58)
- Whether the scheme would have an acceptable landscape impact (CP 51)
- Whether the site can be adequately drained without increasing flood risk elsewhere (CP 67)
- Whether there would be any harmful impacts upon protected species or priority habitats (CP 50)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WC Archaeology: No comment

WC Public Protection: No objection

There are no adverse comments concerning the proposal.

WC Ecology: Comment

A BNG small sites metric has been submitted, and there are no other obvious ecology issues on this application.

WC Highways: No Comment

Parish/Town Council: No objection

REPRESENTATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), the application was publicised by way of:

- Neighbour notification letters sent to adjoining and nearby properties;
- A site notice displayed near the site;

These methods were used to inform interested parties and provide a period of 21 days for comments to be submitted. No representations were received.

ASSESSMENT Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

In accordance with this statutory requirement, this application has been assessed against the relevant policies of the Development Plan, including the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and, where applicable, any made Neighbourhood Plans. Consideration has also been given to the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as a material consideration in the assessment.

Principle of Development

Policy Context

Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy of the WCS establishes a hierarchy of settlements to guide where development should be focused. The policy prioritises growth in:

- Principal Settlements (e.g., Salisbury, Chippenham, Trowbridge) – main focus for strategic growth.
- Market Towns – support local services and employment; suitable for sustainable development.
- Local Service Centres – smaller towns and villages with a range of services; limited development supported.
- Large and Small Villages – development should be limited and respond to local needs.
- Outside the defined settlements – development is strictly controlled and generally not supported unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy of the WCS sets out how development will be distributed and delivered across Wiltshire. The policy emphasises:

- Sustainable patterns of growth, reducing the need to travel and supporting local services.
- Development should be plan-led, aligning with the settlement strategy and supported by infrastructure.
- Windfall development (not allocated in plans) must still comply with the principles of sustainable development.
- Development outside settlement boundaries is generally not permitted, unless it meets specific policy exceptions (as set out in paragraph 4.25 of the WCS).

Together, CP1 and CP2 ensure that new development is strategically located, sustainable, and supports the character and function of Wiltshire's communities.

Assessment

Core Policy 19 sets out that development in rural areas should maintain the character of the countryside while supporting the viability of rural communities. This proposal seeks to upgrade

the existing infrastructure within a working farmyard without introducing non-agricultural uses or extending beyond the farmstead.

Core Policy 35 seeks to support proposals that support the continued use or enhancement of employment land for economic activity will be supported.

Core Policy 48 supports development that maintains or improves rural services and businesses where proposals are reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture, and do not adversely affect the character of the area or lead to the loss of important landscape features.

Agricultural holdings are considered part of the rural economy, so improvements that sustain farm operations, such as the proposal, align with these policies. Given that the proposal is appropriate in scale, massing, and design and layout, in addition, submitted details advise it would be secured through funding from DEFRA the proposal is deemed acceptable in principle.

Conclusion

Taking into account the above, the proposal is deemed to be in accordance with the policies of the WCS and the objective of the NPPF. It is acceptable in principle, subject to site-specific assessment.

Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

Policy Context

Core Policy 57 of the WCS requires high-quality design that:

- Enhances local character.
- Responds to the natural, historic, and built environment.
- Retains important features (e.g., trees, hedges).
- Supports sustainable construction and compatibility with surrounding uses.
- Creates safe, legible, and accessible spaces.

Section 12 of the NPPF emphasises design that is:

- Visually attractive.
- Functionally effective.
- Contributes to the quality of the built environment.

The Wiltshire Design Guide encourages sensitivity to local character, materials, and architectural styles and supports modern living standards while maintaining aesthetic and functional quality.

Assessment

The proposed building would serve to cover an existing manure clamp located within the confines of an established farmyard, which significantly limits its visual impact on the wider countryside. The scale and design—steel portal frame with fibre cement roof and concrete panels—are typical of modern agricultural structures and therefore consistent with the rural character of the area. By consolidating development within the existing farmstead, the proposal avoids encroachment into open countryside and maintains the pattern of built form associated with agricultural use. While the building is substantial in size (30 m x 27 m, ridge

height 10 m), its siting adjacent to existing farm buildings ensures it reads as part of the farm complex rather than an isolated feature. The use of muted materials will further reduce prominence and help integrate the structure into its setting. Parish council advised no objection to the application.

Conclusion

Overall, the development is not considered to result in harm to the character or appearance of the area and complies with Core Policy 51, Core Policy 57, and the Purton Neighbourhood Plan objectives to protect rural character.

Amenity

Policy Context

Core Policy 57 (Point vii) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to respect the amenity of existing occupants and ensure appropriate amenity levels for future residents.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly Paragraph 135, reinforces the need for development to provide a high standard of amenity for both existing and future users.

The proposed building is situated within the established farmyard at Hayes Oak Farm, well-contained by existing agricultural structures and landform. The nearest residential properties not associated with the farm are located over 300 metres away, separated by intervening fields and vegetation, which significantly limits direct views and potential for overlooking or loss of privacy. Given the agricultural nature of the proposal and its functional design, and the fact that it is set away from the main farmhouse, separated by existing farm buildings, the building will not introduce noise, light, or activity beyond what is typical for a working farm. No objections were received regarding public protection or public representations in response to the application.

Conclusion

Overall, the proposal is not considered to result in unacceptable harm to neighbouring residential amenity and is deemed to be in accordance with WCS CP 57 and the objectives of the NPPF.

Highways Impacts and Parking

Policy Context

Transport implications are a key factor in assessing planning applications, especially for larger developments. Proposals must demonstrate:

- Safe and suitable access for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and those with mobility impairments.
- No severe residual impacts on the surrounding highway network.
- Promotion of sustainable travel, reducing reliance on private vehicles.
- Adequate parking and cycle provision, in line with adopted standards.
- Protection and enhancement of public rights of way and active travel routes.

Relevant policies include Core Policies 60–64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, supported by the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan, Car Parking Strategy, and Cycling Strategy. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and LTN 1/20 (DfT) provide further design guidance for active travel infrastructure.

Proposals must also ensure safe access for refuse collection vehicles and comply with the Wiltshire Council Waste Storage and Collection SPD (2017).

Where necessary, Transport Assessments or Statements should be submitted to evaluate impacts and identify mitigation. Planning conditions or legal agreements may be used to secure off-site improvements, travel plans, or contributions to sustainable transport infrastructure.

Assessment

The proposal does not involve the creation of new vehicular or pedestrian access points. Access to the site will continue to be via the existing farm entrance from Hayes Knoll, which connects to the local highway network, and the development will not generate additional traffic beyond that associated with normal farm operations.

Conclusion

Given these factors, the proposal is considered acceptable in highway terms and complies with WCS Highways Policies, which require safe and suitable access without adverse impact on the highway network.

Ecology and Biodiversity

Policy Context

The ecological impact of development is a key planning consideration, especially for larger schemes. Proposals must assess and address potential effects on:

- Protected species
- Priority habitats
- Ecological networks
- Green and blue infrastructure

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to:

- Avoid harm to ecological assets.
- Deliver measurable Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), in line with the Environment Act 2021.
- Support habitat restoration and connectivity.
- Integrate biodiversity into site design.

The Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy (2022–2030) promotes nature recovery, ecosystem services, and habitat connectivity through development.

Unless exempt, National policy requires a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for major developments, demonstrated via:

- Biodiversity Metric calculations
- Ecological assessments (e.g. PEAs, Phase 1 surveys, protected species surveys)

Assessment

Submitted details advise that a site walkover was undertaken on 16 September 2025 by a Chartered Surveyor, confirming that the development area comprises an existing farmyard manure store on a sealed concrete base within an established farmyard. No priority habitats, designated sites, or European protected species were recorded on or adjacent to the site. The submitted BNG Metrix baseline biodiversity value shows a calculated zero units using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Version 1.2.3), reflecting the absence of vegetated habitats.

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>

The proposal involves the erection of a steel-framed building over the existing manure store, with no additional land take or habitat loss. The development will deliver indirect environmental benefits by reducing nutrient runoff into watercourses, supporting wider ecological objectives. Additional biodiversity enhancement, such as the installation of bird and bat boxes, can be secured by condition.

In this instance, the application is considered to fall within the “de minimus” exception to Biodiversity Net Gain but the onus is on the applicants/developers to confirm their compliance with this new legislation outside of planning as the legislation is deemed, regardless of any permissions granted. The site is also considered to comply with CP50 of the WCS, as the very limited development of the site is not considered to remove any ecological features, resulting in no net loss.

Conclusion

Given the above, the proposal is deemed to be in accordance with Core Policy 50 and the Purton Neighbourhood Plan's commitment to protect and enhance biodiversity, and the objectives of the NPPF.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Policy Context

Core Policy 67 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and NPPF paragraphs 170–182 require:

- Avoidance of increased flood risk.
- Use of appropriate mitigation measures.
- Application of the sequential and exception tests for developments in Flood Zones 2 or 3.

Assessment

The application site lies within Flood Zone 1, as confirmed by the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning, indicating a low probability of flooding from rivers or the sea. Development in Flood Zone 1 is generally considered appropriate for all uses, including agricultural buildings, subject to standard drainage considerations.

There are no watercourses within 20 metres of the site, and the proposal will not increase flood risk elsewhere. Surface water will be managed through rainwater harvesting tanks, reducing runoff and supporting sustainable drainage principles.

The design complies with Core Policy 57 by incorporating sustainable water management measures and ensuring resilience to climate change. The proposal does not require a formal Flood Risk Assessment under national guidance but demonstrates that flood risk has been appropriately considered.

Conclusion

The development is acceptable in flood risk terms and accords with national policy and Core Policy 67.

PLANNING CONCLUSION

The proposed development is considered acceptable in planning terms. The benefits of the scheme, including improved agricultural efficiency, environmental enhancements through reduced nutrient runoff, and support for the rural economy, are judged to outweigh any identified harms, which can be appropriately mitigated through planning conditions or other controls. The proposal is in accordance with the Wiltshire Core Strategy, including Core Policies 19, 35, 48, 50, 51, and 57, the National Planning Policy Framework, and all other relevant material considerations.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to conditions detail in the PLANNING DECISION.