

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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(South/West)

Officer's Name: Steven Sims
Officer's Title: Senior Planning Officer

Application No: **PL/2025/10007**

Outline planning application for the erection of up to 77 dwellings, public open space, landscaping and sustainable urban drainage system, with vehicular access off Ashley Coombe. All matters reserved except for means of access.

Land off Ashley Coombe, Warminster, Ashley Coombe, BA12 9QU

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 (PP) 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.

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 214-16 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." It is also required that distinctive elements of Wiltshire's historic

environment, **including non-designated heritage assets**, which contribute to a sense of local character and identity will be conserved, and where possible enhanced.

The following points are taken from the Historic England document “The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 3” (HE GPA3) that are considered to be particularly relevant:

HE GPA3 Part 1:

“The NPPF makes it clear that the setting of a heritage asset is the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset.”

“The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. ...views of or from an asset will play an important part...”

“While setting can be mapped in the context of an individual application or proposal, it cannot be definitively and permanently described for all time as a spatially bounded area or as lying within a set distance of a heritage asset. This is because the surroundings of a heritage asset will change over time.”

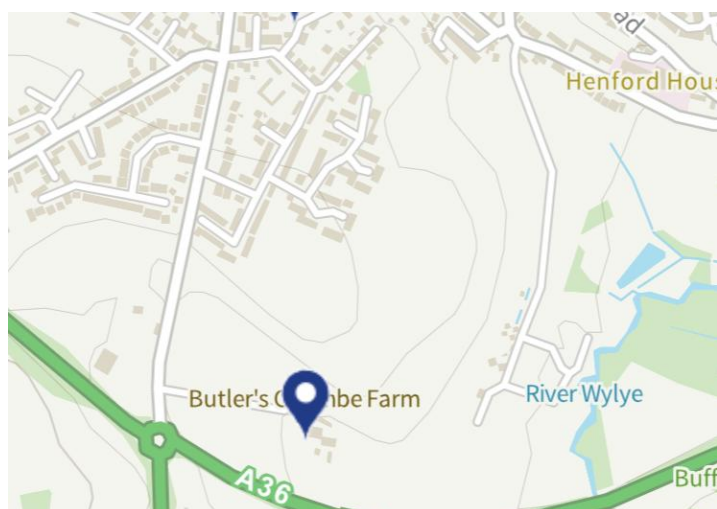
“The importance lies in what the setting contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or to the ability to appreciate that significance.”

Site and assets considered:

The site is an open area south of Lower Marsh Road, Warminster. The proposed access is from Ashley Coombe which is off Deverill Road.

The site is not in a conservation area.

The nearest listed building is Butler's Coombe Farm which lies to the south of the site.



Butler's Coombe Farmhouse is a grade II listed building. The list entry reads as follows:

‘C18 altered to local 'Gothick' in mid C19. 2 storeys square and box-like. Left hand part of west front of local rubblework with large quoins, right hand part of brick. Hipped slate roof with central brick chimneys. 2 ranges of windows, 2 light casements on 1st floor, 3 light casements on 1st floor, 3 light casements on ground floor, with pointed heads and drip moulds, all with glazing bars and moulded

frames. Similar 2 light windows on left and right hand ground floor returns. 'L' plan with 2 storey rear wing and glazed entrance in angle'.

Issues: impact of the proposals on the setting of Butler's Coombe Farmhouse.

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 applications are accompanied by a heritage assessment (Landgate Heritage) and as such the requirements of the NPPF are met. 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.**”

The applicant's heritage consultants have identified two designated heritage assets as being potentially impacted by the proposed development: Butler's Coombe Farmhouse and Christ Church. Both are listed at grade II.

In respect of the church, the consultant notes at 4.1.14 that *'the church is located within the churchyard and surrounding cemetery and set back from the nearby highway.'* And at 4.1.15 *'The setting of the building consists predominantly of the experience provided from the surrounding churchyard'* That there are views to the church tower from the site does not mean that the site is within its setting. As such, I would agree that the proposed site makes a *'neutral contribution'* to the church (or rather that the site is not within the setting of the church).

Butler's Coombe Farmhouse, the heritage consultant notes *'the views of the Farmhouse from the study site are largely screened by tree line and vegetation, with only limited views from the Public Right of Way'*. The consultant then goes on to say (4.1.8) that *'There is no historical association between the study site and Butler's Coombe Farmhouse and does not form part of its setting as evidenced by the 1839 Tithe Map of Bishopstrow'*.



I am unclear why the 1840s tithe map evidences a lack of a functional connection between Butler's Coombe Farm and the site. The VCH notes that by 1882 (The Divided Parishes Act) smaller areas of land were detached from Warminster and assigned to neighbouring parishes ie 'detached parts of Bishopstrow and Norton Bavant, which adjoined Warminster on the south, were included within it....'

In any case, it is somewhat academic. Intervisibility is not a key determinant of setting (Keldeston Hall judgement). Part of the significance of the farmhouse derives from its rural agricultural setting. Clearly if the farmhouse was now hemmed in by development, it would undermine an appreciation of its former functional relationship with the surrounding countryside, eroding its significance. As such, I cannot agree with the heritage consultant's conclusion that the '*proposed development would cause **no impact** in the case of Butler's Coombe Farmhouse*' (6.1.4).

Assessment and conclusion

As previously stated, I consider **some harm** would arise to the significance of Butler's Coombe Farmhouse as a result of development within its setting. I consider that harm would be 'less than substantial' (NPPF terminology). In which case paragraph 215 is engaged.

Some harm may be mitigated by increasing planting (a natural hedge and trees) along the southern boundary of the site.