

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Application No: PL/2026/00855
**Erection of 4 dwellings, two semi-detached dwellings, gardens and parking
Land between 83/91 Bath Road , Melksham, SN12 8AD**

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.

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 affects the setting of a number of neighbouring listed buildings which are Grade II listed buildings.

Proposal: The proposal seeks the erection of 4 dwellings, two semi-detached dwellings, gardens and parking

Relevant planning history: W/1/01577/OUT – Residential development

Issues: impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings.

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, whilst the application is accompanied by a "Planning Statement" the document provides no assessment of the impact of the proposal on the heritage assets and, as a result, it fails to meet the requirements of the NPPF.

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 buildings affected by this proposal lies largely with their historic fabric and architecture - form, layout and architectural expression/detailing and use of high-quality design materials which have significant aesthetic and architectural interest.

Assessment: This proposal is for development of the land adjacent to 83 Bath Road Melksham. The development comprises the erection of four dwellinghouses, two semi-detached, three-bedroom homes with room-in-the-roof arranged over three floors, with parking and amenity space. The land has benefit from an outline planning consent to erect dwellinghouses under planning approval reference W/01/01577 /OUT.

The site is hard surfaced in tarmac and served as surface parking/ overspill parking for the former Cooper Tire factory which is directly opposite to the site (Cooper Tire) and is no longer in use.

The adjacent buildings are almost all residential dwellings except for the Former Cooper Tire factory site opposite.

The proposed dwellings are aligned in a linear presentation fronting out to Bath Road. Car parking is shown in a linear layout directly off the street. The proposed houses are 2.5 storey with room in the roof accommodation. The design of the houses have stone heads, brick soldier course cills and matching contrasting string course. Lead style entrance canopies are also shown on the front elevation.

In conservation terms the proposed layout would be unduly dominated by the proposed parking to the front of the dwelling which are pushed back from the road frontage. The strong preference would be to retained the existing historic stone front wall which is an established feature and encloses the street scene in a positive manner. The preference would be to have car parking for the development to the rear of the dwellings, as shown in the outline application.

Regarding the design of the dwellings, these are somewhat 'anywhere design' and are unduly suburban. The more Victorian design of the approved outline scheme is considered a more positive solution with greater verticality which would give a stronger more positive design character, with features such as sash windows and stone heads. The outline scheme also has greater roofscape interest.

The proposed scheme does not include boundary treatment and given that the site affects the setting of a number of listed buildings, these need to be shown.

In regard to materials, stone walling is more in keeping with the locality than buff bricks. Brick soldier course cills are not a local feature.

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.

Whilst the principle of residential is supported, a higher quality design is needed, one which is less 'anywhere suburban' without parking dominating the street scene. The currently proposal is seen as watering down the design quality previously approved at outline.