

Our ref.: MW/Slade

24th February 2026

Wiltshire Council
Development Management
Economic Development and Planning
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
BA14 8JN

Willis & Co.

Chartered Town Planners
30 The Causeway
Chippenham
Wiltshire
SN15 3DB

Telephone: (01249) 444975
Facsimile (01249) 655556

Dear Sir,

Town & Country Planning Act 1990
Change of use of garage to dwelling, The Well Cottage, Church Road, Ham, SN8 3RB. Application ref. PL/2026/00553

1. We are instructed by Mr & Mrs D. Slade of Doves House, Ham to object to the above planning application. The application should be refused on the basis that the proposed dwelling is contrary to national policy; that the previous permission for tourist use does not create a precedent; that the building is too small, having regard to the Nationally Described Space Standards; and that parking provision is inadequate, unneighbourly and harmful to the Conservation Area.

Core Policies 1 and 2 and the NPPF

2. Whilst it is generally accepted that Wiltshire Council is unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of suitable housing sites and therefore paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged, this does not mean that the policies of the Core Strategy should be given no weight at all. One additional small dwelling in a Small Village with limited access to services will add little to reducing the shortfall. New dwellings should generally be directed to more sustainable locations, such as the Principal Settlements and the Local Services Centres. The onus is on the applicant to demonstrate that market housing meets an identified local need. If there is such a need in Ham, it is likely to be for affordable housing. On balance, and in the light of the following comments, the need for housing is clearly outweighed by the harm as described below.

The existing planning permission for tourist use.

3. Whilst the application asserts that the 2019 permission for the conversion of the garage to a tourist unit has been implemented, there is no evidence to confirm that this is the case. There is no Certificate of Lawfulness. Whilst the operational development may have commenced, it is not claimed that the building has been used for tourist purposes. It is noted that the application

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does not assert this; hence the description is for the change of use from a garage (the lawful use) to a dwelling. The 2019 approval for the conversion to tourist use was approved on the basis that the development complied with Policy CP39, which supports tourist related development in Small Villages; but no such policy support can be claimed for a dwelling. No weight should therefore be attached to the 2019 planning permission (even if it remains extant) to support an application for residential use. When considering such matters as traffic generation; impact on amenity and the impact on the Conservation Area, the starting point must be the existing garage; the starting point should not be considered to be the tourist accommodation.

Nationally Described Space Standards

4. This is a 2-storey, 4 person dwelling (it has 2 double bedrooms). The NDSS requires that a dwelling of this type and scale must have a gross internal area of at least 79 square metres, including 2sqm of storage. This scheme fails on both counts. Whilst the application claims that the floor area is 78.32 sqm, which at first glance appears to be almost enough to comply, there are further criteria in NDSS to be met. Furthermore, without plans and sections with dimensions, it is impossible to confirm the usable internal floor area of the dwelling. In addition to the above, the NDSS says;

- in order to provide 2 bedspaces, a double bedroom has a floor area of at least 11.5sqm.

It appears that both bedrooms fall far short of this minimum floor area - even without the sloping ceilings and restricted headroom. Without dimensions and a section, it is impossible to assess the usable floor area and the minimum width, but it is likely that the shortfall in floor area for both bedrooms is significant.

- 1 double is at least 2.75m wide and every other double bedroom is at least 2.55m wide.

The bedrooms may be wide enough, depending on the available ceiling heights. But there are no dimensions or sections submitted, so we are unable to make the necessary assessment.

- any area with a headroom of less than 1.5m is not counted within the Gross Internal Area unless used solely for storage (if the area under the stairs is to be used for storage, assume a general floor area of 1m² within the Gross Internal Area).

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Again, with no dimensions or section it is impossible to confirm compliance - but it does not appear to comply.

- any other area that is used solely for storage and has a headroom of 900-1500mm (such as under eaves) is counted at 50% of its floor area, and any area lower than 900mm is not counted at all.

There does not appear to be any allocated storage space on either floor.

- a built-in wardrobe counts towards the Gross Internal Area and bedroom floor area requirements, but should not reduce the effective width of the room below the minimum widths set out above. The built-in area in excess of 0.72m² in a double bedroom and 0.36m² in a single bedroom counts towards the built-in storage requirement.

- the minimum floor to ceiling height is 2.3m for at least 75% of the Gross Internal Area.

It is not possible to check for compliance with these criteria without dimensions or a section.

5. I would be grateful if you would confirm that the applicant will be required to submit additional plans with written dimensions and sections to demonstrate that the scheme complies with every relevant part of the Nationally Described Space Standards. However, it is unlikely that the scheme can comply with the requirements of the NDSS and perhaps it would be more appropriate for the applicant to withdraw the application.

Parking provision.

6. We understand that four parking spaces are proposed to serve both the host dwelling, Well House, and the proposed dwelling. (As an aside, we do not consider that space 4 will work and should be discounted. It impedes the swing of the gate; it would prevent access to spaces 1-3; also, vehicles using this space would be unable to turn within the site.) We understand that Well House has four bedrooms and therefore requires 3 parking spaces. The proposed 2-bedroom dwelling requires two spaces, in accordance with the Councils adopted parking standards. In this location, where alternatives to private car are not readily available, and where on-street parking on Church Road may block the single track lane, and on-street parking at the front of

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Well House would be inconvenient to other road users, there are no reasonable grounds for the Council to accept a reduced level of off-street parking provision.

7. I am not sure that there is sufficient space to turn any of the vehicles within the site, which is a further issue, given the limited width of Church Road. No provision appears to have been made for EV charging; cycle parking; or for bin storage. At present, bins for the host dwelling are located just inside the gate, where parking space 4 is located. Where will these bins – and the additional bins for the proposed dwelling – be located?

8. In addition to the above, the parking for the host dwelling situated immediately outside the proposed dwelling is clearly unacceptable in terms of residential amenity. It is clearly unacceptable for the occupiers of the proposed dwelling to be disturbed at any time of day or night by the occupiers of Well House entering, manoeuvring and leaving the site in their vehicles (or filling or moving their bins), immediately outside of the proposed dwelling.

9. Furthermore, moving or expanding the parking and turning area to accommodate the necessary five parking spaces and a suitable turning area into the undeveloped area to the east of the proposed dwelling is also likely to detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

10. Again, in the light of the significant shortfall in parking provision, the poor relationship between the parking for the host dwelling and the proposed dwelling, inadequate information regarding turning within the site, bin storage for both dwellings and the issues which are likely to be raised if the parking and turning area were to be expanded into the garden area, the applicant should perhaps be invited to withdraw the application.

Conclusions

11. In conclusion, the lack of a 5-year supply of suitable housing land in Wiltshire does not mean that every residential development must be approved. The Council still has to make a planning judgment as to whether the proposed development is in a sustainable location. In making such a judgment, the 2019 planning permission for tourist use, which has never been brought into use (and is unlikely ever to be brought into use) must not be given any weight. The onus is on the applicant to demonstrate that there is a need for open-market dwellings in this location.

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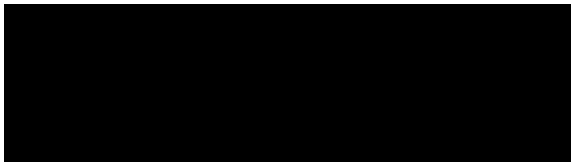
12. The proposed dwelling must comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards. There is insufficient detail in order to fully assess compliance with the NDSS, but on the basis of the information submitted, it is clear that the requirements of NDSS are not satisfied.

13. The parking arrangements are wholly unsatisfactory; five parking spaces should be provided to serve the two dwellings. The ability to turn all vehicles off the highway so that they might enter and leave the site in forward gear should be demonstrated; the parking for the host dwelling immediately in front of the existing dwelling is wholly unsatisfactory in terms of amenity. No provision for bin storage for either dwelling is indicated on the plans; there are no provisions for EV charging, or cycle parking.

14. Finally, expanding or moving the parking area into the open land to the east of the garage would be harmful to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

15. As outlined above, there are several sound planning policy reasons why this planning application should be refused.

Yours faithfully,

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature of Marc D. Willis.

Marc D. Willis BTP MRTPI FSAg