

APPLICATION FOR FULL-PLANNING PERMISSION

CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2025/09871
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	MOD Lyneham, Calne Road, Lyneham, Chippenham, SN15 4XX
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Demolition of two brick chimney stacks and replacement with two number new stainless steel twin lined flues. Adjacent oil storage tanks and bunded walls to be demolished and ground decontaminated.
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve with Conditions

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The site lies within the secure MOD Lyneham estate on Calne Road, Lyneham and covers approximately 500 sqm. The development area comprises Building 79, a purpose-built boiler house serving the site-wide LTHW and HTHW district heating network. The building contains two chimney stacks with internal stainless steel flues, alongside nearby oil storage tanks and bunded walls. The surrounding land is previously developed MOD operational land with no public access or public rights of way. The building is not listed nor within a conservation area.

PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought for the demolition of two existing chimney stacks and the erection of two replacement stainless-steel twin-lined flues, to serve the operational boiler plant within Building 79. The proposed flues will be finished in matt . Adjacent oil storage tanks and associated bunded walls will also be removed, with the ground below to be decontaminated as part of the works.

PLANNING HISTORY

No recent relevant planning history

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 and Cricklade Community Area
- Core Policy 37 Military Establishments
- Core Policy 41 Sustainable Construction and Low-Carbon Energy;
- Core Policy 55 Air Quality;
- Core Policy 56 Contaminated Land;
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;

Neighbourhood Plan:

Lyneham & Bradenstoke Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020–2030 Made 2021

- Policy 2 Design
- Policy 3 – Brownfield Employment Development

Supplementary Planning Documents and other Guidance:

- Wiltshire Design Guide (adopted April 2024)
- Air Quality SPD (July 2023)

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 site can be adequately drained without increasing flood risk elsewhere (CP 67)
- Whether there will be any land contamination / air quality issues (CP 55)
- Are there any other planning issues raised by the development?
- What planning obligations are required to make the development acceptable in planning terms?

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WC Public Protection: No Objection

There are no adverse comments concerning the proposals.

Parish/Town Council: No comment received

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 public representations were received in response to this application.

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.

Policy CP37 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy states that new development at operational military facilities will be supported where it is to help enhance or sustain their operational capability.

Assessment

Although MOD Lyneham lies outside any defined settlement boundary, Core Policy 1 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) confirms that development outside settlements is strictly controlled unless exceptional circumstances apply; operational military infrastructure is one such recognised circumstance where development is required to maintain essential site functions. The NPPF supports proportionate upgrades to existing infrastructure and encourages the efficient use of previously developed land

The proposed works comprise the replacement of existing chimney infrastructure and the removal of redundant oil tanks within the operational boundary of MOD Lyneham. As such, the development represents minor operational upgrading on long-established previously developed (brownfield) land.

Conclusion

Accordingly, the proposal accords with the principle of development established by the WCS, NPPF and neighbourhood plan, and is therefore acceptable in principle.

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 development would represent a proportionate upgrade to the existing infrastructure, as it would replace the bulky brick chimney stacks with slimmer, modern twin-lined flues finished in matt black. This would reduce visual massing and ensure a coherent and functional appearance that would remain entirely in keeping with the existing boiler house and wider operational context of the MOD estate. The works would have no effect on natural or historic features and would not alter the established form, scale, or layout of the site. The new flues would be functionally essential, visually recessive, and would improve the quality and efficiency of the built environment by modernising critical energy infrastructure.

Given the enclosed and secure nature of the MOD setting, coupled with the absence of public views into the operational area, the proposal would preserve local character and would not result in any harm to wider landscape or public viewpoints.

Conclusion

The proposal represents a modest and functional upgrade to existing utility infrastructure within the secure MOD Lyneham site and, as such, results in no adverse impact on the character or appearance of the surrounding area. The proposal is deemed to be in accordance with Wiltshire Core Policy CP57 the Policies of the Neighbourhood Plan and objective of the NPPF.

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.

Building 79 is located deep within the secure MOD estate, well within the fenced operational area, and entirely removed from any public viewpoints. It is not situated near, or within the visual or direct influence of, any on-site or off-site accommodation blocks, mess facilities, family quarters, recreational areas, or sports facilities. The proposed works would be confined to the existing boiler house and would constitute a modest upgrade to essential services that support the functioning of the wider camp. As confirmed through consultation,

Public Protection has raised no amenity or environmental concerns.

The proposal is therefore determined to be in accordance with Paragraph 135 of the NPPF, the proposal would maintain a high standard of amenity for all users, with no adverse noise, visual, or operational impacts. Consequently, the development would be acceptable in amenity terms and would accord with Core Policy 57, the Lyneham & Bradenstoke Neighbourhood Plan, and the overarching 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 proposed works would be wholly confined to Building 79 and its existing curtilage, with all activity limited to the established boiler house footprint. The operational upgrades would not result in any expansion of the building, nor would they alter the defined curtilage or affect vehicle access around the building or to neighbouring operational facilities. Likewise, the works would have no impact on internal vehicle movements within the secure MOD perimeter ("the fence"), as all access arrangements and circulation routes would remain unchanged.

Conclusion

As such, the development would not result in any Highways Safety Impact and is deemed to be in accordance with Core Policies CP60-64 of the WCS and the objectives of the NPPF.

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)

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 result in any net loss.

Environmental Considerations (Noise, Air Quality, Contaminated Land, etc.)

Policy Context

Core Policies 55 and 56 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy require:

- Development proposals to avoid unacceptable environmental impacts.
- To provide appropriate mitigation where risks are identified.

The NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) reinforce this by stating that proposals should:

- Prevent development that contributes to or is exposed to unacceptable pollution.
- Ensure developer responsibility for safe development on contaminated land.

Wiltshire Council’s Air Quality SPD (2023) provides detailed guidance, especially near Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and encourages mitigation such as:

- EV charging infrastructure
- Green buffers
- Sustainable transport options

Assessment

The proposed works would be limited to upgrading existing boiler house infrastructure within Building 79 and would not introduce any new processes, emissions sources, or activities that could give rise to environmental harm.

Given the nature of the development, it is not considered that the development would result in any adverse environmental effects, and the proposals aren't deemed to trigger the need for mitigation, as no pollution risks or land contamination impacts have been identified

As the works would take place within an established operational setting and do not intensify use, alter fuel types, or affect on-site emissions, the development does not engage the thresholds identified in the Wiltshire Council Air Quality SPD (2023) relating to AQMAs, EV infrastructure, or additional mitigation measures.

Importantly, Public Protection have raised no objection and have confirmed no amenity, environmental, or pollution concerns.

Conclusion

On this basis, the proposal is considered environmentally acceptable and fully in accordance with the WCS, national policy, and local air-quality guidance.

Conclusion

The proposed development is considered acceptable in planning terms. The benefits of the scheme—including the modernisation and improved efficiency of essential site-wide heating infrastructure, the removal of outdated plant, and the environmental betterment arising from the decommissioning of oil tanks and contaminated ground—would clearly outweigh any limited effects associated with the works, none of which give rise to adverse impacts and can be appropriately managed through standard planning controls. The proposal would constitute a proportionate and sustainable upgrade to existing operational facilities, supporting the continued functioning and resilience of the MOD estate. Accordingly, the development is in accordance with the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the National Planning Policy Framework, and all other relevant material considerations.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to conditions set out below.

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

- Location and Block Plan DRM 0305 S4 A02 Received 7th January 2026
- Proposed Elevations DRM 0301 S4 A01 Received 7th January 2026
- Proposed Roof Plan DRM 0303 S4 A02 Received 7th January 2026
- Application Form Received 18th December 2025

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 3 The materials to be used in the construction of the external flues shall be matt-black painted stainless steel, as specified in the application.

Reason: To ensure a high-quality appearance that accords with Core Policy 57 (WCS) and the NPPF Section 12 design requirements.

- 4 All redundant chimneys, associated fixings, and the existing oil tanks and bunded walls shall be fully removed from the site prior to the first operation of the replacement flues.

Reason: To secure the environmental benefits presented within the application and ensure the removal of the obsolete plant.

Informative Notes

- 1 Any alterations to the approved plans, brought about by compliance with Building Regulations or any other reason must first be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority before commencement of work.
- 2 The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition “(the biodiversity gain condition”) that development may not begin unless:

(a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and

(b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be Wiltshire Council.

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>

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements listed below are considered to apply.

The permission which has been granted has the effect of requiring or permitting the development to proceed in phases. The modifications in respect of the biodiversity gain condition which are set out in Part 2 of the Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024 apply.

Biodiversity gain plans are required to be submitted to, and approved by, the planning authority before development may be begun (the overall plan), and before each phase of development may be begun (phase plans).

Irreplaceable habitat

If the onsite habitat includes irreplaceable habitat (within the meaning of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) there are additional requirements for the content and approval of Biodiversity Gain Plans. The Biodiversity Gain Plan must include, in addition to information about steps taken or to be taken to minimise any adverse effect of the development on the habitat, information on arrangements for compensation for any impact the development has on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat.

The planning authority can only approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if satisfied that the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat is minimised and appropriate arrangements have been made for the purpose of compensating for any impact which do not include the use of biodiversity credits.

- 3 The applicant should note that the grant of planning permission does not include any separate permission which may be needed to erect a structure in the vicinity of a public sewer. Such permission should be sought direct from Thames Water Utilities Ltd / Wessex Water Services Ltd. Buildings are not normally allowed within 3.0 metres of a Public Sewer although this may vary depending on the size, depth, strategic importance, available access and the ground conditions appertaining to the sewer in question.
- 4 In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it should be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment should be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of step (i) above and where remediation is necessary, a remediation scheme should be prepared in accordance with the requirements of step (ii) and submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.