

APPLICATION FOR FULL-PLANNING PERMISSION

CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2025/09216
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Unit 1B, Uffcott Farm, Uffcott, Wiltshire, SN4 9NB
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Change of use from office unit to 1 bedroom holiday let (Retrospective)
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve with Conditions

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

Uffcott Rural Business Park is a former farm building within Uffcott Farm, now converted to multiple business units granted consent for conversion with a 'B1' use. 'B1' no longer exists having been replaced in 2020 by E(g) Uses which can be carried out in a residential area without detriment to its amenity:

E(g)(i) Offices to carry out any operational or administrative functions,

E(g)(ii) Research and development of products or processes

E(g)(iii) Industrial processes)

Unit 1B sits within a range of converted farm buildings known as Uffcott Rural Business Park, just to the south of Swindon.

The unit is single storey, approximately 44m² total and includes consists of 2 rooms and a w/c. 2No spaces are shown to the front of the unit however there is additional parking available across the wider site.

The site is located within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape in Flood Zone 1 and there are no other notable planning constraints pertinent to the site.

PROPOSAL

Permission is sought for the change of use of unit 1B from a B1 Business Use to a holiday let. Since 31/10/2026 the unit has been occupied as a holiday let. No physical alterations are proposed to the unit.

PLANNING HISTORY

K/32015 - Change of use of two farm buildings to business use (Class B1). PER

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 14 Marlborough Community Area Strategy
- Core Policy 39 Tourist Development
- 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 61 Transport & Development;
- Core Policy 64 Demand Management

Supplementary Planning Documents and other Guidance:

- Wiltshire Design Guide (adopted April 2024)
- Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026, adopted 2015 - including the Car Parking Strategy and Cycling Strategy, adopted 2015

ISSUES

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

- Whether the development is acceptable in principle (CP 1, 2 & 39)
- 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 proposal would have a negative effect upon highway safety, including if there is sufficient parking for the proposed development (CP 61 and 64)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WC Highways: No objection

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;

These methods were used to inform interested parties and provide a period of 21 days for comments to be submitted.

Below is a summary of the representations received during the consultation period. Only material planning considerations have been taken into account in the assessment of this application. Non-material issues, such as property values or private legal disputes, cannot be considered in the determination process.

2No letters of objection were received raising the following matters;

- Retrospective nature sets a precedent for further unauthorised development
- Development is unacceptable in principle as it lies outside any framework boundary and is inappropriate and unsustainable
- Would create pressure for a permanent dwelling
- Increase in vehicle movements
- No mechanism to ensure unit remains as a holiday let
- Increased light pollution
- Precedent for further tourism development across wider site

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

Core Policy 1 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy paragraph 4.16 explains that there is a general presumption against development outside the defined limits of the Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Large Villages. Paragraph 4.17 goes on to explain that 'carefully managed development' may be allowed outside of settlement boundaries in specific cases which include tourist accommodation or supporting the rural economy. In these

cases, all development must respond to the local circumstances by meeting the requirements set out in the exception policies contained within the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

The site is located in the countryside, wherein development will not normally be permitted other than in accordance with specified exception policies. One such exception policy is set out at Core Policy 39 of the WCS, which allows for tourist development of an appropriate scale subject to certain criteria. Paragraph 6.30 explains the value of tourism to Wiltshire's economy and describes how the built and natural environment is a key part of the tourism product. It also states that the future success of the area's tourist industry is dependent on the effective management and conservation of the environment.

This is supported by the NPPF guidance, Section 3, which also describes the importance of providing tourist facilities in appropriate locations where there is an identified need and where needs are not met by existing facilities. It also explains that these developments should respect the character of the countryside.

i. There is evidence that the facilities are in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction.

In this instance whilst located within the open countryside, it is within an attractive and popular part of the National Landscape within a network of footpaths leading to Barbury Castle, the surrounding villages and White Horse and also the Ridgeway

ii. No suitable alternative existing buildings or sites exist which are available for reuse.

The proposal is for the change of use of an existing building.

iii. The scale, design and use of the proposal is compatible with its wider landscape setting and would not detract from the character or appearance of the landscape or settlement and would not be detrimental to the amenities of residential areas.

No physical alterations are proposed to the property nor is the change of use from an office to a holiday let considered to impact on the character or appearance of the landscape. The intensity of development entailed in a small holiday let is not considered to harm amenities of local residents.

iv. The building is served by adequate access and infrastructure.

It is acknowledged that the application site is in a rural location and occupiers would depend on private vehicles to access some local facilities. Notwithstanding the above, the development is not considered to be of an intensity that would raise concern in terms of highway safety with an existing access being utilised by the numerous businesses and there is parking available onsite.

The Councils' Highway Officer has been consulted and offers no objection to the scheme, adequate parking available onsite to serve the development however conditions are recommended to ensure the holiday use is maintained as such..

v. The site has reasonable access to local services and a local employment base.

The wording of Policy 39 has been queried at a number of appeals, given that the word 'reasonable' has no definition in the Core Strategy. Given the limited number of occupiers who could attend the site at any one time, the nearby facilities available and that such development would often be located in rural settings, the locality is not considered sufficiently remote to

warrant a refusal of the application alone. The unit forms part of the wider Uffcott Farm Estate and Business Park.

In light of the above, it is concluded that the proposed development is capable of support under Core Policy 39 and is acceptable in principle, subject to consideration of the impacts and site-specific matters.

Impact to Residential Amenity

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 introduction of tourist development in close proximity to existing residential development has the potential to create noise-based nuisance in a manner harmful to the amenity of the residential use.

Concerns have been raised that the nature of the use could result in light pollution. There are no new openings to be positioned on the building and given the small-scale nature of the development, it is not considered that a tourist use will give rise to unacceptable levels of light pollution over and above the existing business use, notwithstanding the site's location in a National Landscape.

Comments have been received relating to the potential for disturbance due to additional traffic movements. Given the low-key nature of the development and the existing business use it is not considered that the proposal would result in an unacceptable increase in noise or disturbance above the existing situation.

Likewise, the development raises no concerns in respect of privacy or overshadowing, and no conflict is therefore found to occur with Core Policy 57

Design and Impact on the Landscape, Character and Appearance of the National Landscape

Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires all development to protect, conserve, and where possible enhance the character and quality of Wiltshire's landscapes, giving particular weight to designated areas such as National Landscapes.

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF requires that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.

Under Section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, LPAs and other relevant authorities must now "seek to further" the statutory purposes of National Landscapes (formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty), replacing the previous duty to merely "have regard to" them.

This is an active duty, requiring authorities to take reasonable and proportionate steps to support the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, special qualities, and key characteristics of these designated areas when exercising any function that affects them.

The site is located well within the confines of the wider site which is already utilised as a rural business park. No new built form and as discussed above, the use is not considered to give rise to harmful impacts on the landscape such as through light spill. The proposal, by virtue of its scale, siting, and design, would not harm the special qualities or scenic character of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.

The development therefore complies with Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the NPPF in conserving and enhancing the National Landscape.

Highways Impact

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.

As discussed above in the principle section, the Highways Officer has raised no objection to the proposal in terms of access and parking on the site.

Other Issues

Concerns have been raised that the Retrospective nature of the proposal sets a precedent for further unauthorised development. Retrospective planning applications must be treated in the same way as applications for proposed development, and it does not mean that permission will be granted. However, where development is sought to be retained, that an LPA considers is acceptable and complies with the relevant planning policies, planning permission can be granted retrospectively.

Concerns have also been raised that this will set a precedent for further tourism uses across the whole site. Every application is considered on its own merit and consideration in this instance has been given to the scale and nature of the use proposed. Any future application for change of use would be considered having regard to existing uses on site taking into account contemporaneous pressures on the road network, and matters of sustainability and amenity as a result of the cumulative effect of additional similar development.

As discussed above, conditions are recommended relating to the use as a holiday let and these conditions are considered to adequately secure this. The potential use as a permanent dwelling would fall to be considered under different planning policies and requirements. The site is located within the middle of a business park where consideration would need to be given to the amenity of future occupiers in this location. As such it is not considered that the tourist use would result in additional pressure for a permanent dwelling.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Section 7A of the TCPA introduces a statutory requirement for most developments to deliver a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The application has been submitted for retrospective planning permission. As such, the pre-commencement biodiversity gain plan condition (imposed by Section 7A of the TCPA) cannot be imposed.

CONCLUSION

The site lies in a location where tourist development can reasonably be supported by Core Policy 39 of the WCS. The development meets the relevant criteria under this policy and other relevant policies. There are no site-specific concerns over the development, it is recommended that this application be approved, and planning permission granted accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to conditions

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:

2562 S201

2562 S101

2562 P201

Received 27.11.25

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

3) The development shall be occupied as holiday accommodation only and shall not be occupied as permanent, unrestricted accommodation or as a primary place of residence. An up to date register of names and main home addresses of all occupiers shall be maintained and shall be made available at all reasonable times to the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: This site is in a position where the Local Planning Authority, having regard to the reasonable standards of residential amenity, access, and planning policies pertaining to the area, would not permit permanent residential accommodation.