

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

9 April 2026

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Wiltshire Council Conservation (Central)

Officer's Name: Andrew Thomas
Officer's Title: Planning Officer

Application No: PL/2025/09906
Proposal for x1 self-build dwelling and associated works.
The Old Paddock, Winsley, Wiltshire, BA15 2LN

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 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.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 also requires the Council to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of designated Conservation Areas.

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 an area of open paddock in Winsley Conservation Area. It also affects the setting of a number of listed buildings.

Proposal: The proposal seeks one self-build dwelling and associated works.

Relevant planning history: ENQ/2023/01301 - Erection of one dwelling (objection – based on lack of information /justification).

Issues: impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings, impact on the conservation area.

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 Statement" which provides sufficient information to understand the impact of the proposals and is proportionate to their scope. The requirements of the NPPF are therefore met in this respect.

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 site lies largely with its historic open green pastoral character which contributes to the character of the conservation area and setting of the adjacent listed buildings. The stone screen/link boundary walls and mature trees on the site also contribute to the essential character of the village, although it is the sites open character that is the most significant attribute and is a rare survival as a Post Medieval paddock within Winsley Conservation Area.

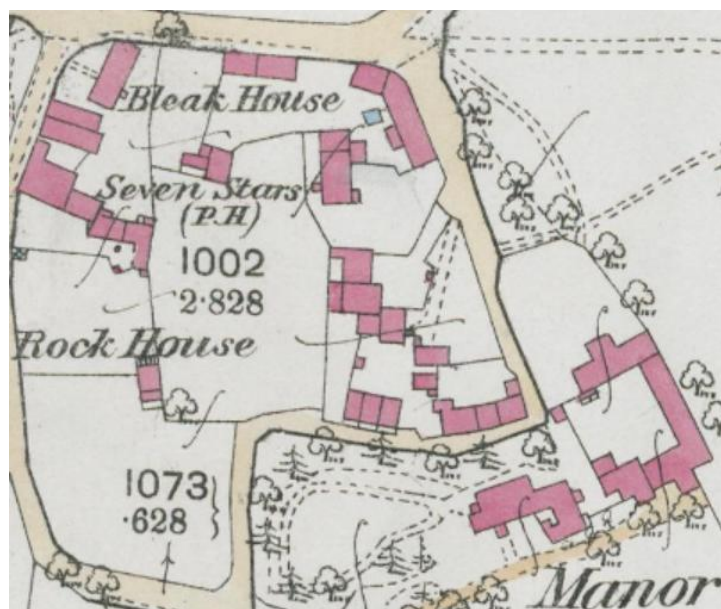
Assessment: The application concerns a historic open green pastoral parcel of land within the Winsley Conservation Area. The site is close proximity to a number of Listed Buildings which are Grade II listed (Manor Farm, Steven Stars PH and Bleak House).

The revised development has been amended to a more traditional one and a half storey, three/four bed, detached dwelling, with large garage and amenities on the green space. The property would be accessed via a new entrance south off The Paddock which would involve partial demolition of the existing drystone boundary wall.

Map regression work shows the site has historically served as open space as part of wider parcel of land to the north now used as garden to Manor Farm. Indeed, the site has historically served as open space associated with the neighbouring buildings and has never been developed, as shown in the 1840's Tithe Map (parcel of land 1515):



The First Edition Ordnance Survey Map shows the site including land within the curtilage of Manor House to the north, as an uncultivated parcel of land within a complex of dwellings and outbuildings, with the Seven Stars Public House to the northwest and cultivated gardens to the east and west.



The paddock preserves a Post Medieval enclosure pattern, located within the northern extent of historic Winsley. The surrounding low drystone is also considered to be a non-designated heritage asset and also makes a positive contribution to the special character of Winsley Conservation Area.

The significance of the site lies largely with its open green character which contributes to the character of the conservation area and setting of the adjacent residential houses, four of which are listed buildings and others are considered non designated heritage assets.

The site contributes positively to local character and appearance and is green relief within the Conservation Area and the setting to a number of listed buildings and is worthy of retention in its current form. I also consider that the open historic pastoral character of the site is a landscape features of cultural, historic and heritage value in its own right.

As such there is an in-principle objection to the loss of this green space due to its contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of the other heritage assets (designated and non-designated).

There are also concerns regarding the knocking through of the dry-stone boundary wall and the creation of a new double access and driveway at the termination of the view along Bradford Road. This would create loss of enclosure and would suburbanise the site.

Whilst the repair of the dry stone boundary as part of this proposal is recognised as being of heritage benefit, this would not outweigh the substantial harm of the loss of a significant area of this traditional historic pastoral open space which is a feature of the conservation area. The loss and alteration of this important feature would be a negative element that would erode the significance of the historic assets to a clearly discernible extent and represent a permanent moderate adverse change.

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.

The proposals will result in loss of a historic pastoral green space which contributes to the character and appearance of Winsley Conservation Area and the setting of a number of designated and non designated heritage assets. The proposals involve only part of the conservation area and setting of the listed buildings and could therefore be considered as causing 'less than substantial harm' for the purposes of interpreting the NPPF, but they involve the loss of a locally important green space and this should not be seen as being of lesser consequence. Indeed, the wording of the NPPF and the 'special attention' by Section 72 and the 'special regard' by Section 66 of the Act requires that any level harm caused should be taken seriously.

Whilst paragraph 208 allows that a level of harm may be offset by public benefits, which could include conservation benefits, in this case no objective justification has been provided for the works and the proposals are articulated as being primarily for the convenience of the owner i.e. a private benefit. Whilst the repair to the drystone boundary wall is seen as a limited enhancement to the conservation area the application would result in the permanent loss of this important local

green open space. As a result, the proposals fail to meet with the requirements of current conservation legislation, policy or guidance and I therefore recommend refusal.