

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/01620
APPLICATION TYPE:	Permission in Principle
SITE ADDRESS:	Land North of West Street, Great Somerford, Chippenham, SN15 5EH
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Permission in Principle for Erection of up to 2 No. dwellings
RECOMMENDATION:	Planning Permission be REFUSED

PROPOSAL AND SITE DESCRIPTION

This application seeks Permission in Principle (PiP) for up to 2no dwellings. The application site comprises undeveloped agricultural land in 'Great Somerford', a large village part of the Malmesbury community area. Great Somerford benefits from a neighbourhood development plan (NDP) covering the period 2016-2026, and a defined framework boundary. All but the south-eastern corner of the site is outside of the framework boundary; however, both the east and western edges of the site are directly adjacent to the boundary. The degree of spatial link that the site has to these boundaries provides clear connection to the settlement whilst the exclusion from the framework boundary indicates the value that the visual break of built form provides between the dwellings east and west of the public right of way (PRoW) 'GSOM27'. This value is further indicated by the sites inclusion as part of the NDP's designation of the wider parcel (LGS7) as local green space.



Figure 1: site(red) & PRow (purple) Figure 2: site & framework boundary (black) Figure 3: Officer site photos (2026)

The site is highly visible from the PRoW, which runs through the eastern edge of the site, and is also highly visible from parts of the adjacent classified C road 'West Street'; there is gated access to the site via a private track connected to the highway. The site is within the Great Somerford Conservation Area (CA) and near Grade II listed 'Manor Farmhouse'. At the time of writing, the CA does not benefit from a made appraisal or management plan; however, part of the site (the

northeast corner) sits within the historic settlement boundary for Great Somerford and as such has potential for archaeological value.

The Environment Agency (EA) identifies the site as being within flood zone 1, at the lowest risk of flooding from rivers and seas and indicates that the site is within the inner zone (SPZ1) for groundwater source protection. The Councils Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) indicates that the site is likely to be at very low risk of surface water flooding and medium level risk of groundwater flooding.

PLANNING HISTORY

Relevant planning history at the site:

None

Recent, relevant planning history near the site (inter alia):

Manor Farm House: (directly adjacent to site, within CA, within framework boundary)

- N/04/01519/FUL and N/04/01520/LBC granted renewed planning permission and listed building consent, respectively, for *conversion of barn to dwelling* on 21.07.2004

Broadfield Farm: (less than 500m south-east, adjacent to CA, within framework boundary)

- 21/01950/FUL for *Proposed development of 21 residential dwellings, vehicular access from Broadfield Farm, ancillary works and associated infrastructure* was granted planning permission at appeal on 28.03.2023
- PL/2024/06427 granted planning permission for *1 no self build dwelling* on 07.11.2024

Land at West Street, Great Somerford, Chippenham (opposite to the site, within CA, outside of framework boundary)

- PL/2023/06033 for *permission in principle for development of up to 2 no dwellings* was refused under delegated powers on 21.05.2024
 - o Appeal APP/Y3940/W/24/3345527 against the decision was allowed on 09.11.2024

Officer Note:

Given the close proximity between this application site and the appeal site 'Land at West Street, very careful consideration has been given to the findings of that appeal decision.

It is Officers opinion that the appeal decision provides clear contextual guidance but does not give determinative precedent value for other PiP applications in this area unless the site circumstances are genuinely comparable. This is because the inspector's conclusions were expressly tied to the characteristics of the appeal site. Whilst, for the appeal site, it was found that the loss of openness would not cause harm to the character or appearance of the CA, it is Officers opinion that this finding would not routinely apply to other nearby local green spaces - particularly not to those which are more visually prominent, more intact as field breaks, or more closely related to listed buildings and their settings.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Though considered as a whole, applicable Development Plan policies are listed below along with relevant legislation and guidance.

Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) – Adopted 2015

- CP1: Settlement Strategy
- CP2: Delivery Strategy
- CP13: Spatial Strategy for the Malmesbury Community Area
- CP45: Meeting Wiltshire's Housing Needs
- CP48: Supporting Rural Life
- CP50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- CP51: Landscape
- CP52: Green Infrastructure
- CP57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
- CP58: Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment
- CP60: Sustainable Transport
- CP61: Transport and Development
- CP64: Demand Management
- CP67: Flood Risk

Saved Policies of the North Wiltshire Local Plan (NWLP)

- H4: Residential Development in the Open Countryside

Great Somerford Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

- Section 6: Settlement Boundary
- Policy GSNP7: Local Green Spaces

Wiltshire Local Transport Plan (LTP4)

Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan 2020

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)

Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 (2017 order)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (habitats regulations)

Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (EIA regulations)

HOUSING LAND SUPPLY

The Councils Housing Land Supply (HLS) Statement (base date: April 2024) was published in June 2025 and covers the HLS for Wiltshire and each Housing Market Area within Wiltshire as set

out in the WCS. The HLS position identified under section 6 of the statement expresses that the current number of years deliverable supply is 2.42 years.

Briefing Note (No. [25 – 04](#)) dated 18.06.2025 reiterates that position and states under section 2.3 that: *The council cannot demonstrate the requisite five-year housing land supply. The current position indicates there is a 2.42 years supply.*

ISSUES

The main issues in the consideration of this application are:

- Whether the development is exempt from permission in principle
- Whether the site location, land use, and amount of development is suitable in principle
- Whether the land use is suitable in principle
- Whether the amount of development is suitable in principle

CONSULTATION

Great Somerford Parish Council: Object

On behalf of Great Somerford Parish Council, I am instructed to make representation in respect of the above referenced planning application. The Parish Council OBJECTS to the development proceeding. Reasons for the objection include the following:

- *Conflict with the strategic aims of the development plan;*
- *Development in conflict with the aims of designation of the land as Local Green Space;*
- *Harm to heritage assets, in particular the Great Somerford Conservation Area;*
- *Inability to provide safe access and egress onto the highway; and*
- *Harm to the character and appearance of the area.*

[...]

The development would conflict with the purposes of the site's designation as Local Green Space, eroding the quality and availability of green space within the village of Great Somerford and having a harmful impact on the local character and the Great Somerford Conservation Area. Harmful impacts on the LGS and the CA are strong reasons for refusing planning permission, and there is no 'tilted balance' operative in this case. The development is contrary to the overarching strategic policies of the development plan set out at Core Policies 1, 2 and (for the purposes of this area) 13. Due to this significant policy conflict and as there is no tilted balance necessary, the development should be considered unacceptable in principle. There are significant tensions between highways visibility, the footpath and the historic environment inherent in developing this site. It is not at all clear that these tensions are capable of being resolved satisfactorily. Given the limitations of the Permission in Principle process it is therefore the Parish Council's view that this application should be refused for these reasons as well.

Councils Archaeology Team: No Comment

I have no comment to make on this Permission in Principle application but would ask that Archaeology is consulted again if a Technical Details application is made.

Councils Conservation Team: Object

The site is the southern end of a larger agricultural field extending to the north from West Street. It is bounded to West Street by a low stone wall with hedge behind which forms a significant break in the built form on West Street. The west boundary of the site is formed by the brick boundary garden wall of the listed Manor Farmhouse. The east boundary is The Manor Stables and The Granary now converted but formerly part of the agricultural building related to the Manor on the south side of West Street a substantial 19th century house.

*There is a public footpath and field access to the paddock from the south eastern corner.
[...]*

In this case the significance of the listed buildings comes from their historic walling fabric and vernacular architecture - its form, layout and architectural expression/detailing and use of local design approaches and materials which have some significant aesthetic and architectural interest. In addition, they make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation area as does the break in the development frontage afforded by this field.

The Inspector for the recent November 2024 (APP/X3940/W/24/3345527) extracted in the application planning statement very clearly describes West Street at paragraph 8 as

‘characterised by linear housing development of varying designs, ages and sizes. Some are set behind domestic hedges, others behind fences and historic stone boundary walls and others have a more open frontage. The overall sense travelling along the road is of being within a loosely developed village interspersed with gaps provided by field frontages. The appeal site is one such gap, positioned between existing development.’

These comments succinctly highlight the importance of these field breaks as part of the Conservation Area character and appearance and make a positive contribution to the Area.[...]

The application examines the impact on the Conservation Area character and appearance but does not assess the impact on the setting of the Manor Farmhouse and in particular the garden wall that forms the west boarder of the site.

With respect the Conservation Area the impacts and landscape setting the applicant has taken significant reference to the recent appeal decision on land to the south of West Street for two dwellings (APP/X3940/W/24/3345527) [...]

I would disagree with the narrow reliance on this previous appeal decision and the impact on the Conservation Area. While the amount of development is the same as two dwelling, the sites are very different in character and context and cannot be relied on. I consider the significant character and appearance of the Conservation Area is of these informal brakes to the road frontage of built development by being interspersed by small fields with field boundaries and hedgerows and the loss of this site would be harmful to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

*In addition the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Sections 16 (LBC) and 66 (PP) require that **special regard** be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.*

This 'special regard' obligation requires a Local Planning Authority to consider the setting of listed buildings. This means the standard assessment for a PIP is overridden by this legal duty to protect the heritage assets affected. Any application for a proposal for two houses on this land requires detailed and specific assessment of the impact on setting of the listed buildings and in this case the Manor Farmhouse garden walls that bord the west side of the site. Therefore the application must come under the traditional planning route.

This PIP should therefore not progress beyond stage one as it fails the first stage (or permission in principle stage) as it does not establish that this site is suitable in-principle. [...]

Councils Drainage Team: No Objection

The LLFA have no objections to this permission in principle. The site is situated within Flood Zone 1 with a very low risk of surface water flooding and medium level risk of groundwater flooding. This land is compatible with the vulnerability of the proposed development.

Councils Highways Team: Comment

The site is located in the village of Great Somerford, outside of but adjacent to the settlement boundary and I will be guided by you as to whether you consider the proposal to be contrary to policies CP57 (xiv), CP60(i) and CP61 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the NPPF 2024 paras 109-111 which seek to reduce the need to travel particularly by private car, and support and encourage sustainable, safe and efficient movement of people and goods.

No specific details have been included with regards to the vehicle access other than the gateway into the field is to be used. There is PROW that runs across this gateway and I am aware that the Rights of Way team have also been consulted and the PROW must be taken into consideration. [...]

Councils Rights of Way Team: Comment

I note the planning statement includes an extract from the digital rights of way map showing public footpath GSOM27 running along the driveway adjacent to the site. The digital mapping is a "working copy" of the Definitive Map of public rights of way and, as stated on our online map, should not be regarded as the definitive map and must not be used as a true legal record. We have checked the route of footpath GSOM27 on the Definitive Map and it runs through the field on the route available on the ground. The digital layer has therefore been amended to match the Definitive Map.

I have no objection to the proposal, subject to the public footpath remaining available

through the site at a minimum width of 2 metres. Where any gates across the footpath are no longer required for stock control they should be removed and left as a gap. The footpath should be shown on the site plan submitted at detailed planning stage and proposals for any changes to surfacing and boundaries affecting the path should be provided.

REPRESENTATIONS

At the time of writing more than 100 public representations of objection, including an objection on behalf of the 'Campaign to Protect Rural England', have been received, providing the following summarised concerns:

- Loss of local green space
- Loss of area frequently used by members of the community – particular concern RE loss of accessible green space
- No urgent local housing need
- Impact on the PRow
- Inaccuracies within the application submission
- Impact on the CA
- Impact on setting of Grade II listed building
- Impact on non-designated heritage assets
- Visual impact through loss of a key open break in built development
- Erosion of rural character
- Cumulative overdevelopment in the wider area
- Nearby appeal does not set precedent for this development
- Precedent would be set if permission granted
- Highway safety impacts
- Flood risk
- Impact on biodiversity
- Short consultation timeframe

ASSESSMENT

PiP provides an alternative route for obtaining planning permission for housing-led development. The PiP stage establishes whether a site is suitable in principle (limited to the location, land use and amount of development) and the technical details consent (TDC) stage considers the detailed design, layout, mitigation and all other reserved matters.

Article 5B of the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 prevents the grant of PiP for certain development. Where a proposal is assessed as falling within one of the Article 5B exclusions, the LPA has no power to grant PiP and the application must be refused. The primary assessment to be made at PiP stage is, therefore, whether the proposal is excluded from the PiP regime by Article 5B.

Where the proposal is not excluded by Article 5B, a secondary assessment is undertaken to determine whether the site is suitable in principle regarding the location, proposed land use and amount of development.

As planning conditions cannot be imposed at the PiP stage, whilst any mitigation that is required to make a proposal acceptable in principle must be clearly established at the PiP stage, any mitigation that relates to reserved matters may be separately addressed at the TDC stage. Broadly, however, where mitigation is necessary to avoid or rule out impacts that would otherwise prevent the grant of PiP, the proposal would fall outside the scope of the PiP regime.

Whether the Development is Exempt from Permission in Principle

Context

Article 5B(1) of the 2017 Order directs that an LPA may not grant PiP in relation to development which is:

- Major development
- Habitats development
- Householder development; or
- Schedule 1 development

Article 5B(2) of the 2017 Order further directs circumstances where Schedule 2 development cannot be granted PiP by the LPA.

Exemption Assessment

The scheme is for 2no. dwelling and as such is not proposing major development and is not householder development. The site is not in, or in close proximity to, a European site and consequently the scheme does not require consent under regulation 63 of the Habitats Regulations and the proposal is not habitats development. Furthermore, insofar as the EIA regulations apply, the development is not Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 development.

The proposal is not excluded from the PiP regime by Article 5B; assessment on the principle of development can therefore be carried out.

Whether the Site Location and Land Use is Suitable in Principle

Development Plan Context

Policies CP1 and CP2 of the WCS relate to the spatial strategy for Wiltshire, setting the policy foundations for the promotion of sustainable development within the county. CP13 expresses that development in the Malmesbury Community Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Strategy Set out in CP1.

The majority of the site is outside of, but adjacent to the defined Great Somerford framework settlement boundary. Residential development in this location is broadly not supported by CP1, CP2, and CP13; furthermore, the development does not meet the exemption policies (CP34, CP37, CP39, CP40, CP44, CP46, CP47 or CP48) within the WCS or the aims of saved policy H4 of the NWLP.

CP51 of the WCS sets expectations for development to protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character; CP57 requires development to enhance local distinctiveness by responding to the value of the natural and historic environment; and CP58 further requires development to protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment.

Tilted Balance Context

The Council have accepted that the requisite housing land supply cannot be demonstrated and as such, for applications including housing provision, the policies which are most important for determining the application should be considered out-of-date.

11(d) of the NPPF directs that in these circumstances planning permission should be granted unless one or both of the following apply:

- (i) *the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- (ii) *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.*

Paragraph 14 of the NPPF goes on to further express that:

In situations where the presumption (at paragraph 11d) applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided the following apply: (a) the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan five years or less before the date on which the decision is made; and (b) the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement.

For the avoidance of doubt, as the NDP was made in November 2017 (and therefore became part of the development plan more than 5 years ago) the requirements of paragraph 14(a) of the NPPF have not been met.

Paragraph 11d(i)

The site is located within flood zone 1 and has not been identified within the SFRA as being in an area at high risk of surface or ground water flooding. The site is not located within (or in close

proximity to) a SSSI, SAC, Ramsar, SPA, SAC or CWS and is not designated as green belt; however, it is designated as local green space within the NDP.

Furthermore, whilst the site is not within a National Landscape area, part of a National Park area, or defined as Heritage Coast, irreplaceable habitat, or a designated heritage asset, it is within the Great Somerford CA and within the setting of Grade II listed building 'Manor Farmhouse'.

Paragraph 11d(ii)

The development is not major development, and permission would not result in the creation of isolated homes in the countryside. Furthermore, the site is in an area which would not require any future occupants to be wholly reliant on the private car to access facilities. At the time of writing, the site is considered to be in a sustainable location.

Public concerns have, however, been raised around whether safe and suitable access to the site is achievable. Further concerns have been raised regarding whether there is a need for the proposed housing, as well as the impact on the character and setting of the area.

Summary

The scheme proposes 2no dwellings which would bring about some benefit to the HLS for Wiltshire. No further benefits have been indicated within the application submission; it is nonetheless acknowledged that some limited localised economic benefit would be likely to arise during the construction phase of the development, and it is anticipated that there would be some ongoing economic benefit when the dwellings are occupied by virtue of receipt of council tax etc. Overall, however, given the scale of the development, the benefits associated with the construction of 2no dwellings are likely to be modest.

Taking into account the site and development specific circumstances, initial assessment regarding the impact of the development on the local green space designation and heritage assets must be made. Depending on the assessment made, impacts identified may result in provide a strong reason for refusing the development.

Particularly in circumstances where there isn't a strong reason for refusing the development identified as part of that initial assessment against the provisions of paragraph 11d(i), secondary assessment regarding whether any adverse impacts of granting PiP - in relation to the provisions of paragraph 11d(ii) - would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of 2no dwellings will also be made.

In circumstances where there is no strong reason for refusal and where the adverse impacts of granting PiP do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, the application should be approved.

Location and Land Use Assessment

Impact on the Local Green Space

The application site forms part of an NDP designated local green space – referenced LGS7. The NDP does not make explicit comment, under policy GSNP7, on what features resulted in the site being included within the list; however, does broadly indicate that all green space designations within the NDP are:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves
- demonstrably special to the local community
- local in character

Paragraph 108 of the NPPF directs that decisions for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with national policy for Green Belts as set out in chapter 13 of the NPPF, other than the provisions relating to grey belt and previously developed land.

For the avoidance of doubt, chapter 13 of the NPPF expresses how the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts, with paragraph 153 directing that *inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful*. Paragraph 154 instructs Local Planning Authorities to regard development as inappropriate unless a set exception applies, summarised below:

- (a) *buildings for agriculture and forestry*
- (b) *the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments [...]*
- (c) *the extension or alteration of a building [...]*
- (d) *the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.*
- (e) *limited infilling in villages*
- (f) *limited affordable housing [...]*
- (g) *limited infilling or complete redevelopment of previously development land [...]*
- (h) *other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:*
 - (i) *mineral extraction*
 - (ii) *engineering operations*
 - (iii) *local transport infrastructure [...]*
 - (iv) *the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction*
 - (v) *material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and*
 - (vi) *development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order*

The development site relates to an area of land which, whilst it reads as being within the settlement, is outside of the defined framework boundary and is designated as local green space. The site is valued as an undeveloped visual break in built form which enhances the rural local character and makes a meaningful contribution to the appearance of the area. Whilst paragraph 154(e) recognises 'limited infilling in villages' as development which may (by exemption) be development that is not inappropriate, the purpose of this exemption is to enable the consolidation of existing built form and should not be taken as justification for the loss of protected open land.

It is clear from the number and content of public objections received on this application that the greenspace offers special value to residents in the following summarised ways:

- used for walking and enjoyment of the outside space which benefits physical and mental wellbeing
- used for dog walking and picnicking
- particularly cherished for its accessibility by virtue of it being relatively flat
- used as a community meeting point which reduces loneliness, particularly for older residents
- as the village lacks a formal central green, this area acts in a similar way and is somewhat irreplaceable
- it gives an immediate sense of rural beauty
- it maintains open views and green gaps
- it contributes positively to the CA setting
- it provides for biodiversity

In addition, as part of a site visit carried out by the local planning authority, a number of these points were observed, including:

- the green space was well maintained and easy to traverse
- members of the public were seen walking and greeting one another
- dogs were seen being walked
- the visual value of the greenspace in providing a gap in built form was evident
- the general sense of tranquility was evident

The public objections raise substantial and consistent evidence that the green space is demonstrably special to the local community, performing an important role as an accessible green space used daily for recreation, social interaction and wellbeing including by older residents, children and people with limited mobility. The above factors align closely with the purposes of local green space designations, and, whilst the scale of the development is such that not all of the green space would be lost, the part that would be lost is of high visual value, providing a break in built form that enhances the character of the area and existing buildings therein. On this occasion, it is not considered that careful landscaping and design associated with the 2no dwellings would be sufficient to ensure that the permanent and irreversible harm to public amenity, community wellbeing and the village character is appropriately mitigated.

The development would result in the erosion of a local green space which is deliberately maintained as undeveloped and clearly makes a meaningful contribution to the special character of the setting; as such, the proposal goes beyond that which could reasonably be considered a genuine gap site and consequently is considered to fall outside of the intended scope of limited infilling insofar as paragraph 154(e) of the NPPF applies. The proposed development of 2no dwellings on local green space should, therefore, not be approved except in very special circumstances. In the absence of clearly demonstrated very special circumstances, the proposed development within the local green space is unacceptable in principle.

Designated Heritage Impacts

The application site is within the Great Somerford CA and is adjacent to Grade II listed Manor Farmhouse with its historic garden and boundary wall at the western boundary. Consultation with the Councils Conservation team has been carried out which has resulted in objection following an assessment of harm to these heritage assets. Their specialist review indicates that the undeveloped site provides a distinct and important green gap that contributes positively to the historic setting and raises the following summarised heritage concerns relevant to the location:

- development in this location would result in loss of an important open field frontage, eroding the established rhythm of development and openness in this part of the CA
- development in this location has the potential to harm the setting of Grade II listed Manor Farm by virtue of the proximity to the historic garden wall
- insufficient heritage assessment, particularly regarding the listed building setting, has been provided with the application submission – a proposal for development in this location requires full, detailed assessment

Whilst the representation does not clearly conclude what level of heritage harm would be likely should development in this location be consented, due to the limited information provided, it is clear that development in this location would result in harm to heritage settings and that the local planning authority would not be meeting their statutory 'special regard' duty under sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 if they were to approve planning permission.

Location Conclusion

The site is adjacent to the defined framework boundary and consequently has good access to local facilities. The site is, however, adjacent to a Grade II listed building, within a CA and forms part of a designated local green space; on this occasion, taking all information available to me into account, it is considered that granting permission in principle for development in this location would result in heritage harm and harm to the local green space which arise directly from the location of the site and consequently cannot be resolved at the TDC stage.

Given the above, the harm to the local green space and heritage assets resultant from development in this location has not been demonstrated to be suitable in principle.

Whether the Amount of Development is Suitable in Principle

At PiP stage, the assessment of the amount of development is somewhat limited to addressing whether the quantum of development proposed is so excessive, or so limited, that it would be inappropriate in principle, having regard to the site's location and the setting within which it sits.

In this circumstance, broadly, the size of the sufficient to reasonably accommodate 2 no dwellings with plot sizes commensurate to existing units in proximity.

Furthermore, whilst there have been significant concerns raised by members of the public that the cumulative impact of granting a further 2no dwellings alongside other previously consented development in the area would be inappropriate, 2no dwellings is considered to represent a modest level of growth relative to the size and character of Great Somerford.

Other Issues

Public Right of Way

PRoW 'GSOM27' runs through the edge of the site, including part of the area which is proposed for access to the proposed dwellings. Consultation with the Councils highways and rights of way teams has been carried out which resulted in no objection at PiP stage.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

Overall, the proposed 2 open-market dwellings would be in a sustainable location and the proposed amount of development is not so excessive that it would result in an inherent conflict with the scale or role of the settlement; however, whilst 2no dwellings may be broadly suitable within the context of the village, the location and use of the site is not acceptable by virtue of the identified harm to heritage assets and local green space.

Having considered the application against the development plan, the NPPF, and the statutory framework for PiP, notwithstanding the current housing land supply shortfall, it is concluded that the identified harm forms a strong reason to refuse the application.

RECOMMENDATION:

That planning permission be REFUSED for the following reasons:

- The proposed development would result in the loss of an undeveloped field frontage which forms a historic and visually important break in built development along West Street which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the Great Somerford Conservation Area.

The proposed development in the proposed location would harm the significance of the Conservation Area and the scheme therefore conflicts with section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, heritage aims of the National Planning Policy Framework and Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

- The application site lies adjacent to Grade II listed Manor Farmhouse and its historic garden boundary wall. The undeveloped nature of the site forms part of the setting of the listed building and contributes to its significance. The proposed development fails to adequately assess or demonstrate the acceptability of the impact of the development on the setting of the listed building.

The proposed development therefore fails the statutory duty under section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting, and is contrary to heritage aims of the National Planning Policy Framework and Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

- The application site forms part of Neighbourhood Development Plan designated Local Green Space (LGS7). Evidence from public representations and site observations confirms that the proposed location for the development remains demonstrably special to the local community, providing an accessible and well-used green space valued for recreation, social interaction, tranquility, and for maintaining openness and green gaps within the village.

While the proposal would not result in the loss of the entirety of the Local Green Space, the part affected is of high visual and functional importance. The proposed development in the proposed location would therefore result in permanent and irreversible harm to the value and function of the Local Green Space which could not be adequately mitigated through landscaping or design measures. The proposal cannot reasonably be construed as limited infilling for the purposes of paragraph 154 of the National Planning Policy Framework and, in the absence of clearly demonstrated very special circumstances, the scheme is contrary to local green space aims of the National Planning Policy Framework and unacceptable in principle.

INFORMATIVES TO THE APPLICANT:

- For the avoidance of doubt, plans and documents considered were:
Application Form; signed and dated 09.03.2026
Planning Statement; LPC, dated March 2026
Location Plan; received 09.03.2026
- On its website Wiltshire Council has made available statutory policies in the Core Strategy, Supplementary Planning Documents, Planning Briefs and other informal written guidance. The Council also offer a full suite of pre-application advice services; however, on this occasion, the application was unfortunately submitted without any meaningful pre-application discussions.