

APPLICATION FOR FULL-PLANNING PERMISSION

CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/00905
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Great Elm Farm, Pink Lane, Charlton, Malmesbury, SN16 9DS
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Demolition of existing agricultural buildings and construction of replacement building consisting of office, rest room, wash room and vehicle store
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve with Conditions

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The application site is located at Great Elm Farm, situated off Pink Lane, Charlton, Malmesbury. The farm comprises a farmhouse and a collection of agricultural buildings forming a traditional farmyard setting. The two buildings proposed for demolition (B1 and B2) form part of the development site and sit approximately 10 metres north of the farmhouse, within an area of established hardstanding at the centre of the farm complex. The buildings are modern, agricultural structures with steel sub-frames, blockwork lower walls, and corrugated metal sheet roofs, and are currently used for storage, workshop space, and vehicle parking.

The wider site consists of extensive agricultural land surrounded predominantly by pastoral fields, with large modern cattle sheds situated immediately adjacent to the application buildings. The farmyard surface is concrete. Great Elm Farm is located in open countryside and is not within or near any designated heritage assets or conservation areas. Access to the farm is taken from a driveway at the junction of Pink Lane and Pound Lane. A Public Right of Way (PRoW) CHAR14 and LECL19,31 and 18 are located over the ride from the site. The site is not located in a National Landscape.

PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks full planning permission for the demolition of the existing agricultural buildings (B1 and B2), which together comprise approximately 153 m² of agricultural floorspace, and the erection of a replacement detached agricultural building providing 107 m² of internal floorspace, including an office, rest room, washroom and a vehicle store.

The new structure will follow a steel-framed portal design, with reconstituted stone to eaves height and timber cladding to the gable ends. The roof will be finished in composite metal sheeting, with anthracite grey aluminium windows and doors. The proposed building would sit within the footprint of the demolished structures on existing hardstanding.

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary

N/07/00207/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 27/3/2007 – Erection of Agricultural Building for Livestock Following Demolition of Existing Timber Building
N/08/00802/AGN - Agricultural & Forestry - Detailed matters Decision - DTNR- further details not required Date: 29/4/2008 – Extension to Existing Agricultural Building for Additional Straw Storage
N/08/00795/AGN - Agricultural & Forestry - Detailed matters Decision - DTNR- further details not required Date: 29/4/2008 – Erection of Lean-to Agricultural Building for Livestock Feeding Purposes

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 13 Spatial Strategy Malmesbury Community Area
- Core Policy 35 Existing Employment Land
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Core Policy 56 Contaminated Land;
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 60 Sustainable Transport;
- Core Policy 62 Development Impacts on the Transport Network;
- Core Policy 64 Demand Management

Draft Wiltshire Local Plan Policies [delete/insert above as appropriate]

The examination of the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan has been paused and the weight to be afforded to any part of the emerging plan can be no more than very limited. A decision on how to proceed shall be made by the Council in May (2026).

Neighbourhood Plan:

None

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 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 proposal would have a negative effect upon highway safety, including if there is sufficient parking for the proposed development (CP 61 and 64)
- Whether there would be any harmful impacts upon protected species or priority habitats (CP 50)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WC Ecology: No objection subject to conditions

The Council's Ecologist raises no objection subject to conditions. The submitted Protected Species Report confirms negligible bat roosting potential within the buildings to be demolished, and no evidence of bat use was recorded. Standard controls on external lighting are required to protect foraging habitat. Works must avoid the bird nesting season unless checks are undertaken. As the proposal falls below the BNG de minimis threshold, mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain does not apply. Conditions are recommended to secure ecological compliance, swallow enhancement measures, and a lighting strategy.

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;
- 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.

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.

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.

Assessment

The building would be erected to support an agricultural business which cattle rearing for beef production. Agriculture is defined in Section 336 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as:

“agriculture” includes horticulture, fruit growing, seed growing, dairy farming, the breeding and keeping of livestock (including any creature kept for the production of food, wool, skins or fur, or for the purpose of its use in the farming of land), the use of land as grazing land, meadow land, osier land, market gardens and nursery grounds, and the use of land for woodlands where that use is ancillary to the farming of land for other agricultural purposes, and “agricultural” shall be construed accordingly;

The proposed building is considered to meet the standards set out in the above definition

Core Policy 34 is the WCS’s dedicated policy that deals with additional employment land. This policy states the following: *Outside the Principal Settlements, Market Towns and Local Service Centres, developments will be supported that: ii support sustainable farming and food production through allowing development required to adapt to modern agricultural practices and diversification; or*

The promotion of agriculture and land-based industries is something the Core Strategy is seeking to achieve to move towards a higher value economy (as stated in Core Policy 34). The promotion of agriculture in general is one of the sustainable development objectives of the plan. In terms of principle, the proposal can therefore be supported under Core Policy 34 of the WCS, subject to conformity with other relevant policies of the development plan.

In addition to the WCS, the NPPF is clear and concise with regards to rural economic development stating in paragraph 88 (Supporting a prosperous rural economy) that planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;

Conclusion

Given that the proposed building would replace a large building within the farm complex, which is not fit for use, with a modern, smaller building within the footprint. It would be used for the purposes of farm storage and to provide operational and rest facilities in conjunction with the existing enterprise. The proposal is therefore deemed acceptable in principle and should be supported subject to a site-specific assessment.

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 proposal is considered to have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area. The development replaces two modern but dilapidated agricultural buildings, which are described as being in poor condition, visually unappealing and suffering from leaking and broken roof elements, with a smaller, modern agricultural building constructed within the existing building footprint and entirely contained within the established farmyard. As such, the scheme does not extend the built form, nor encroach into undeveloped countryside. The use of reconstituted stone, timber cladding and composite metal roofing reflects materials that are typical of modern agrarian settings and are consistent with the wider farm complex. This approach ensures the building remains sympathetic to local rural character and aligns with Core Policy 57's requirement to enhance local character and respond positively to the built and natural environment

Conclusion

As such the proposal is determined to be in accordance with CP57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the objectives 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.

These policies guide the assessment of amenity impacts, which will be considered in detail under the below headings.

Overlooking / loss of privacy

The proposal seeks to replace two existing agricultural buildings (B1 and B2) with a smaller, modern structure positioned entirely within the same established farmyard footprint. The building sits approximately 10 metres north of the farmhouse, with the existing arrangement of farm buildings providing a clear physical and functional separation between the development site and the dwelling. No other residential properties are located nearby, and the proposed uses—comprising an office, rest room, washroom and vehicle store—do not introduce any upper-level openings or new viewpoints that would allow overlooking of private

residential areas. As a result, the development would not give rise to any loss of privacy or overlooking for existing occupants.

Loss of light / overshadowing

The replacement building is smaller in floorspace than the existing structures (107 m² proposed compared with 153 m² existing) and occupies the same general footprint within the farmyard. Given its modest scale, its location within a working farm complex, and the separation from the farmhouse by other buildings, the proposal will not result in any loss of light or overshadowing to nearby residential or operational buildings.

Overbearing Impact / Overall sense of enclosure

The existing agricultural buildings are currently large, utilitarian structures that have fallen into a deteriorated condition. The proposed replacement building, while of modern construction, is comparable in height and noticeably smaller in overall floorspace, and remains fully contained within the established built envelope of the farmyard. As the proposal does not extend the built form and simply substitutes buildings of similar massing on the same footprint, it would not create an overbearing presence nor increase the sense of enclosure for the farmhouse or any other nearby receptors

Noise

The proposed building will provide an office, rest room, washroom, and vehicle store to support the day-to-day functioning of the agricultural business. These activities are entirely consistent with the existing use of the site and do not introduce any new or intensified noise sources beyond what is already typical for a working farm. There are no neighbouring residential properties in close proximity aside from the farmhouse, where the existing acoustic environment is already influenced by ongoing agricultural activity. As such, the development is not expected to result in any adverse noise impacts.

Conclusion

The proposal is deemed to not result in material harm to residential or operational amenity. It replaces deteriorated structures with a modest, modern agricultural building that remains within the existing built footprint and maintains appropriate separation from sensitive receptors. The scheme accords with Core Policy 57 (vii) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the amenity requirements 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.

Assessment

The proposal would continue to utilise the existing farm access and would provide covered, secure storage for machinery used in connection with the established agricultural enterprise. It does not seek to diversify the current farm operations or introduce any additional vehicle movements beyond those already associated with the day-to-day running of the farm.

Conclusion

The proposal is deemed not to result in any highway safety and thus accords with Core Policy 60-64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and 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)

Assessment

The Council's Ecologist raises no objection to the proposal, confirming that the buildings to be demolished have negligible potential for bat roosting and no evidence of bat use was found. Given the limited foraging habitat on site, the development is not expected to harm bats,

although a lighting condition is required to ensure new external lighting does not adversely affect nearby bat habitat.

The existing buildings offer opportunities for nesting swallows, and the Ecologist has requested that appropriate swallow nesting features should be incorporated into the replacement building to maintain ecological opportunities. The applicant's Ecology report however explains that retained agricultural buildings at Great Elm Farm provide alternative nest sites for this species and the overall breeding resource for swallows will be maintained. In order to enhance the development site for nesting birds generally, two swift nesting boxes will be provided. The two swift boxes can be installed on the north elevation or east gable wall of the new building. The Ecology statement explains that the provision of swift boxes recognises the fact that swift population numbers are in decline and therefore the scheme aims to provide additional breeding sites for this species. This approach is supported and considered to accord with the aims of CP50.

A careful approach to protecting nesting birds during the construction phase is however recommended for compliance with the legal protection afforded to breeding birds. Works should also avoid the bird-nesting season unless checks confirm nesting birds are absent. An informative can be included to this effect.

The proposal falls below the de minimis threshold for mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), as it does not affect priority habitat and involves only a small area of low-value habitat. As such, statutory BNG requirements do not apply.

Conclusion

Given the details set out, the proposal is determined not to result in harm to protected species and provides proportionate ecological mitigation. The development is therefore considered to comply with Core Policy 50 and relevant national policy relating to biodiversity.

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 site is located within an established farmyard consisting entirely of hardstanding and long-standing agricultural buildings, with no evidence or indication of land contamination or environmental constraints identified within the submitted documents.

The proposal seeks the construction of a replacement agricultural building to provide secure machinery storage, welfare facilities, and operational space associated with the existing farm enterprise—uses that are wholly consistent with the established rural land use and do not introduce activities likely to generate pollution or elevated environmental risk. As such, the development does not pose an unacceptable risk to environmental quality.

Given the nature and scale of the proposal, and its location well outside any Air Quality Management Area, no additional mitigation—such as EV charging or green buffers identified in the Wiltshire Air Quality SPD (2023)—is considered necessary. The development, therefore, represents a low-risk, environmentally appropriate form of rural enhancement.

Conclusion

The proposal is deemed not to result in any environmental harm and thus accords with Core Policy 55-56 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and objectives of the NPPF.

Conclusion

The proposed development is considered acceptable in planning terms. It replaces two deteriorated agricultural buildings with a smaller, modern, and more efficient structure that remains entirely within the established farmyard footprint. The scheme delivers clear benefits, including the visual enhancement of the site, improved operational facilities for the existing agricultural enterprise, and the rationalisation of built form within the yard. These benefits carry weight and, in this case, there are no identified harms that would outweigh them. Any minor impacts can be appropriately managed through standard planning conditions.

The proposal accords with the relevant provisions of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, including policies relating to design, amenity, sustainable development, and rural enterprise; the National Planning Policy Framework; and all other relevant material considerations. On this basis, the development is considered acceptable and is therefore supported.

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:

Location Plan, Existing Block Plan, Floor Plan and Elevations 4439 - 01D Received 17th February 2026

Proposed Block Plan, Floor Plan and Elevations 4439 - 02E Received 17th February 2026

Planning Statement Received 9th February 2026
Application Form Received 9th February 2026

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

3. The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the following approved documents:

Section 5 and Appendix A of the Protected Species Report (Pure Ecology, Ref. 1379 Great Elm Farm Protected Species Report, dated 04 February 2026);
Proposed Plans and Elevations (Dolman Surveyors, Drawing No. 4439-02, Rev. E, dated 06 February 2026).

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt, and to ensure the protection, mitigation and enhancement of biodiversity.

4. The external materials used in the construction of the development hereby permitted shall be in complete accordance with the details submitted within the application, and approved plan ref Proposed Plans and Elevations 4439-02 E, namely:

Walls: reconstituted stone up to eaves height and timber cladding to the gable ends

Roof: composite metal roof sheeting

Windows: aluminium-framed windows finished in anthracite grey

Doors: aluminium doors. Structural Frame: steel-framed portal structure

The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with these approved details and shall be retained as such for the lifetime of the development.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory standard of design and appearance in accordance with the character of the rural area and the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

5. No external lighting, including fixtures or fittings, shall be installed within the application site until full details of all existing and proposed lighting have first been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The submitted details shall clearly demonstrate the expected light spill and assess the potential impacts of the proposed lighting on bat habitat when compared with the existing baseline. All lighting shall thereafter be installed, operated and maintained in full accordance with the approved details and shall comply with the relevant Environmental Zone standards set out in the Institution of Lighting Professionals' Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light (GN01:2021) and Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night (GN08/23), issued jointly by the Bat Conservation Trust and the Institution of Lighting Professionals.

REASON: To ensure that lighting associated with the development does not result in harmful illumination of habitats used by foraging and commuting bats, thereby safeguarding legally protected species and maintaining the ecological functionality of the site and its surroundings in accordance with Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

INFORMATIVE

The applicant should note that under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) it is an offence to disturb or harm any protected species including for example, breeding birds and reptiles. The protection offered to some species such as bats, extends beyond the individual animals to the places they use for shelter or resting. Please note that this consent does not override the statutory protection afforded to any such species. In the event that your proposals could potentially affect a protected species you should seek the advice of a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist and consider the need for a licence from Natural England prior to commencing works. Please see Natural England's website for further information on protected species

INFORMATIVE:

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.

INFORMATIVE

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition (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 not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because one or more of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements is considered to apply.