

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Application No: PL/2025/06519
Change of use to the site from agricultural to domestic. To then develop the site with a bungalow, garage, gardens and drive. Summerleaze Lodge, 10 Beanacre, Melksham, SN12 7PT

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.

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 is an open piece of agricultural land and to its west is a Grade I listed manor house and a Grade II listed barn.

Proposal: The proposal seeks change of use of the land from agricultural to domestic and to develop the site as a bungalow with garage and driveway.

Relevant planning history: None

Issues: impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings.

Information considered/provided: Paragraph 207 of the NPPF 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 application is not accompanied by a "Heritage Statement" and as such the application fails to provide any objective assessment of the impact of the proposals and, as a result, it fails to meet the requirements of the NPPF.

However, paragraph 201 of the NPPF 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 open landscape nature as part of the setting of Beanacre Old Manor and its collection of outbuildings. The Manor dates back to the late C14 and has an open hall and solar. The Manor is listed Grade I and is of national significance. The site dating back to 1870's has always been open and has never been developed.

Assessment: This is my second consultation response and follows the submission of new plans submitted on 8 April 2026.

The application site lies to the east of Beanacre Old Manor, a Grade I listed building of national significance.

Whilst elevations have now been submitted no Heritage Statement has been submitted as required by Paragraph 207 of the NPPF. This level of detail is wholly unacceptable where the setting of a Grade I designated heritage asset of national importance is affected by a development proposal.

As such I maintain my heritage objection to this proposal.

The site is open paddock screened from views from the road by existing trees and vegetation. The site has never been developed and has always been open landscape acting as a buffer to the manor from development.

The proposed change of use and erection of a bungalow and garage would introduce suburban development in the setting of this important Grade I listed building. This would detract from the open landscape setting of the manor and would be a permanent harmful intrusion in the setting of this heritage asset of national importance and significance.

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 harm to the setting of a Grade I listed building through development within its immediate landscape setting. The proposals could be considered as causing 'less than substantial harm' for the purposes of interpreting the NPPF, but they would introduce a form of suburban development in a landscape setting which historically has never been developed and has always been open landscape. Indeed, the wording of the NPPF and the 'special regard' by Sections 16 and 66 of the Act requires that any level harm caused should be taken seriously.

Whilst paragraph 215 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 development and the proposals are articulated as being primarily for the convenience of the occupants i.e. a private benefit. As a result, the proposals fail to meet with the requirements of current conservation legislation, policy or guidance and I therefore recommend refusal.