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ATLAS

PLANNING GROUP

PLANNING STATEMENT

BARN AT GREAT DURNFORD, GREAT DURNFORD, SALISBURY, SP4 6AZ

APRIL 2026

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Atlas Planning Group in support of an application seeking full planning permission for the demolition of a building (which has an approved residential use), and their replacement with one residential dwelling.
- 1.2 In 2022, Prior Approval was granted on site through Class Q of the General Permitted Development Order for the change of use of the agricultural barn to a residential dwelling (LPA Ref: PL/2022/08110). Subsequently, in December 2023, planning permission was granted for changes to PL/2022/08110, including alterations to the fenestration and materials (LPA Ref: PL/2023/08703).
- 1.3 Ownership of the site has since changed, and the Applicants now wish to demolish the remaining building and to erect a purpose-built residential dwelling. Consideration has been given to the planning history of the site whereby an application for a proposal of a similar nature, but very different design, was withdrawn due to design concerns.
- 1.4 The proposals put forward today have been sensitively designed with the dwelling proposed now reflective of a traditional barn conversion. This Planning Statement demonstrates that the proposal preserves the agricultural visage of the site and accords with both local and national planning policy contained within the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site is occupied by an agricultural barn, accessed from an existing track in Great Durnford (Figure 1).
- 2.2 The barn has permission to be converted into a residential dwelling under a recent Planning Permission PL/2023/08703. A second larger barn has been demolished under that consent.
- 2.3 The site is surrounded by agricultural land to the north, south and west. North Farmhouse and the Great Durnford Estate is positioned to the east, which comprises agricultural buildings and shoot lodge.



Figure 1: Site Context

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/2022/08110

- 3.1 In December 2022, a Prior Approval application was granted for the 'Conversion of Existing Grain Drying Barn to C3 Residential Use to Create One New Dwelling.' The dwelling approved comprised 4 large bedrooms with integrated garage.

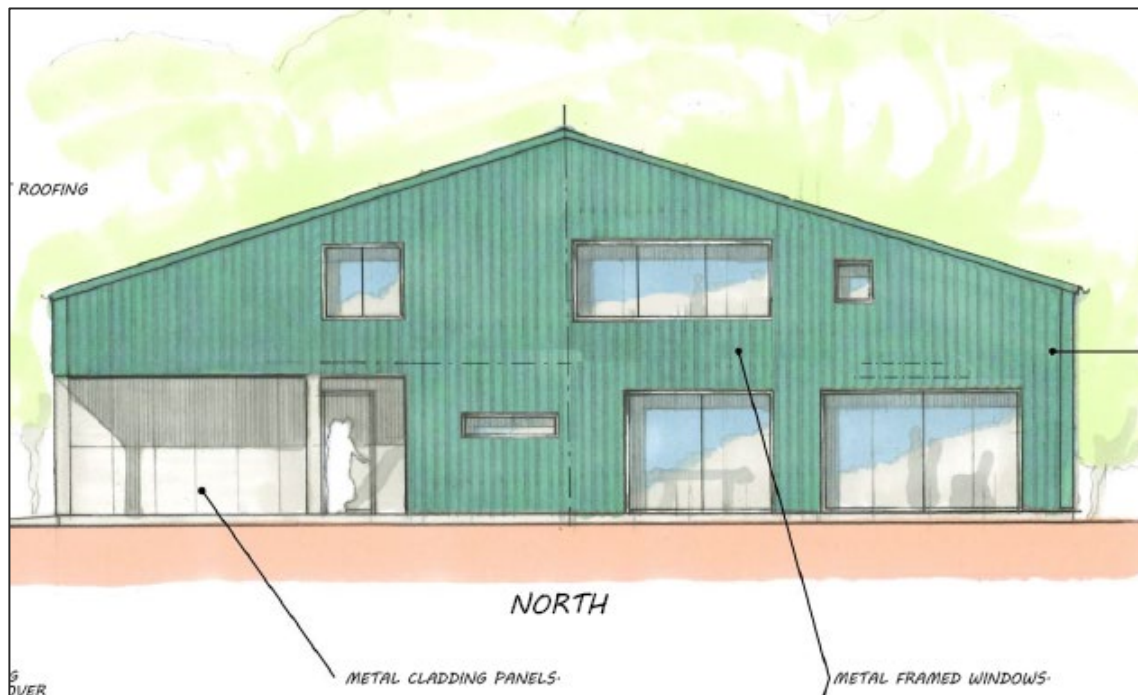


Figure 2: Approved Elevations

PL/2023/05354

- 3.2 In July 2023, a full planning application was submitted to demolish and replace the agricultural building with consent for residential conversion, with a farmhouse style dwelling.
- 3.3 In September 2023, the application was withdrawn following concerns from both the Planning Officer and the Landscape consultee that the architecture of the proposed replacement dwelling would harm the character and appearance of the area.
- 3.4 The concerns of the LPA were summarised in the Officer Report of PL/2023/08703 noting:

- It was considered that as the dwelling did not have any functional association and was not required in this location for the purposes of agriculture, that a farmhouse styled design (shown in PLAN 3 below) and new siting would be a contrived and look odd in the landscape.
- The re-siting of the dwelling only served to further domesticate the site encroaching the residential character further into the countryside
- The agrarian character of the approved conversion scheme would be lost.
- The site is quite visible in the landscape from many places along the lane from Amesbury and so the introduction of unnecessary/unjustified domestic residential vernacular into this setting was not therefore considered to be appropriate or in keeping with the character of the area.
- The Council's Landscape Officer confirmed that the proposed design and siting would have a detrimental impact for the landscape character and setting of this Special Landscape Area.



Figure 3: Previously Proposed Elevations

3.7 The size of the residential curtilage was also increased to be more proportionate to a dwelling of this size.

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Figure 4: Approved Elevations

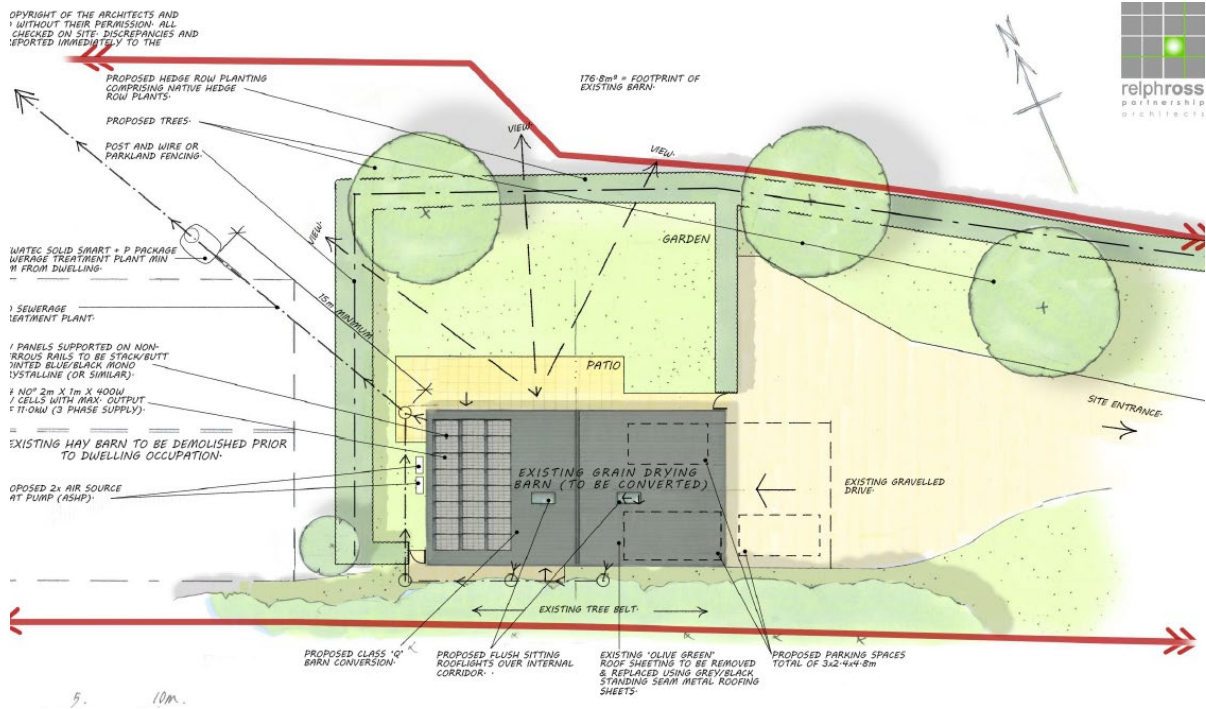


Figure 5 - Approved Site Plan

THE PROPOSAL

4.1 The description of development is as follows:

“Demolition of existing building and the erection of one detached dwelling (Use Class C3), hard and soft landscaping and associated works”.

4.2 The new dwelling has been designed so that it will continue to appear as a barn conversion, albeit now a traditional barn style. Design inspiration has been taken from surrounding development, including a nearby threshing barn (Figure 7), whereby a similar cat slide roof is proposed and materials including timber cladding and brick plinth.

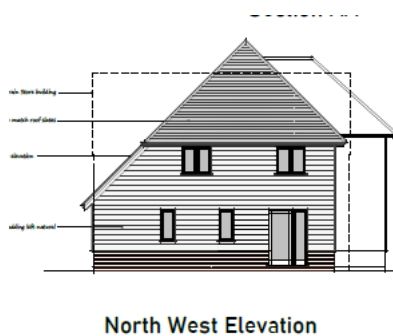
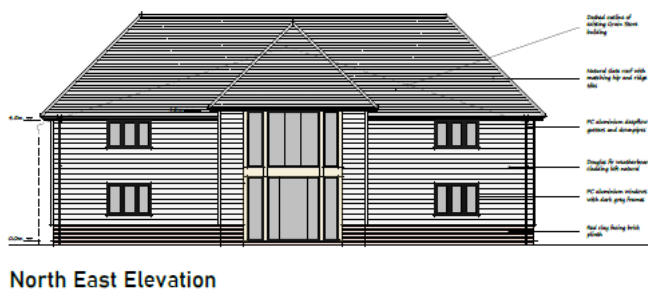


Figure 7: Proposed Elevations



Figure 6: Threshing barn 500m from application site

4.3 The dwelling will be sited on the footprint of the extant consents to ensure that the site is not over domesticated. The extent of the residential curtilage remains as previously approved, along with the drainage arrangements. Due to the proposed cat slide roof and overall scale and form, the massing of built development on site has been reduced, along with the overall built development footprint.

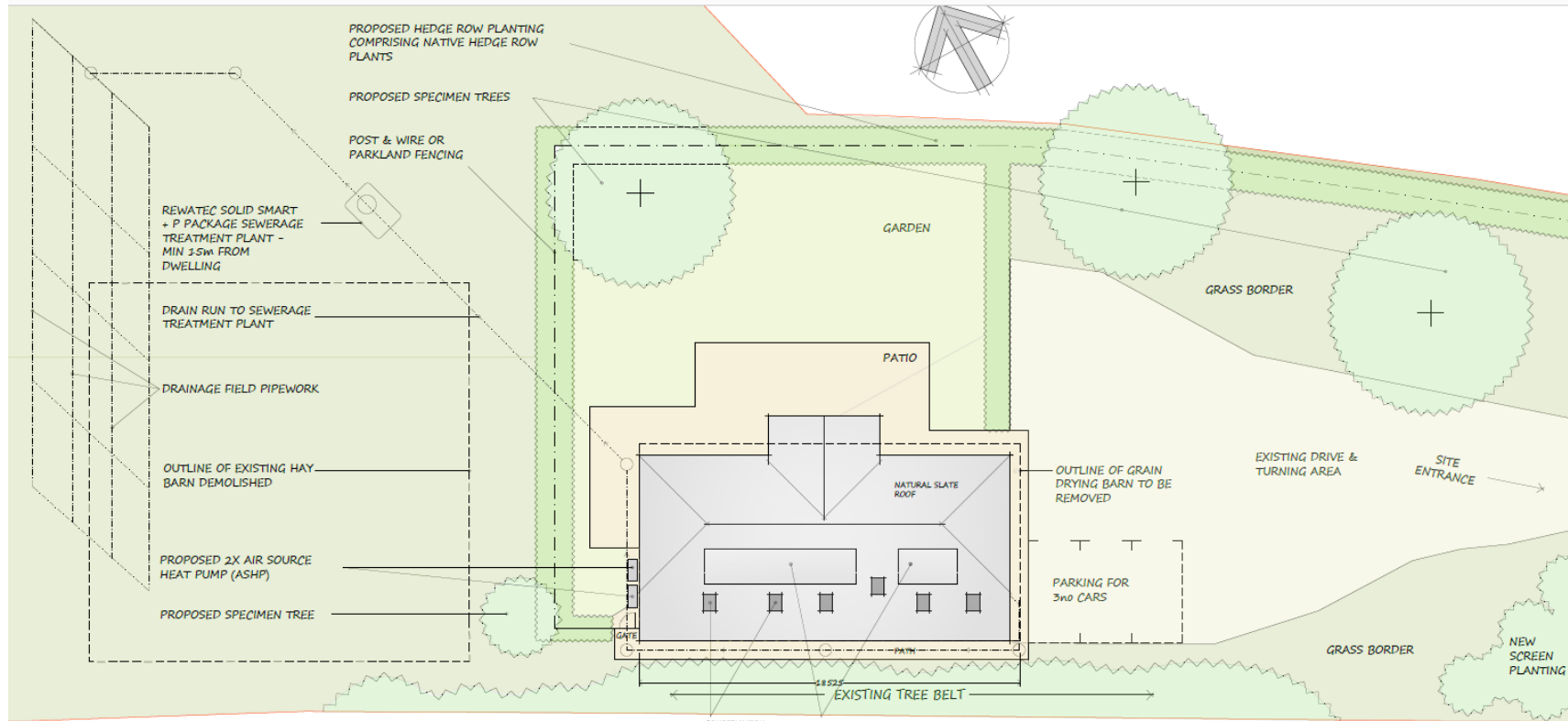


Figure 8: Proposed Site Plan

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy (2015) is the Council's primary Development Plan Document, and the starting point for determining planning decisions, in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. There are also several Saved Policies of relevance from the Salisbury District Plan (2011).
- 5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides a national tier of policy and decision-making guidance for the planning system and forms a material consideration for planning decisions.
- 5.3 The policy and guidance contained within the statutory Development Plan Documents and all other relevant material considerations have been reviewed to ensure the proposal is an appropriate form of development for the application site.
- 5.4 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, Paragraph 11 of the NPPF requires proposals that accord with the Development Plan to be approved without delay.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 5.5 Core Policy 1 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy sets out the 'Settlement Strategy' for the county and identifies four tiers of settlement - Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres, and Large and Small Villages. Only the Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Large Villages have defined limits of development/settlement boundaries.
- 5.6 Core Policy 2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy sets out the 'Delivery Strategy'. It identifies the scale of growth appropriate within each settlement tier, stating that within the limits of development, as defined on the policies map, there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development at the Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Large Villages.
- 5.7 The application site lies 1.3 kilometres to the east of the Small Village of Great Durnford and is therefore in designated open countryside in planning policy terms. Whilst new residential development is normally restricted in the open countryside under Core Policy 1 and 2, the application site benefits from an extant consent for one of the barns to be converted into a residential dwelling (LPA Ref: PL/2023/087030).
- 5.8 Since there will not be a net increase in dwellings on the site, the principle of one dwelling in this location has been established, particularly as implementing the extant scheme is a realistic fall-back.

5.9 Fallback positions are well established in case law and are a significant material consideration in the determination of a planning application. With regards to the Wiltshire Core Strategy, Inspectors have confirmed *"any harm, therefore, in terms of a policy conflict with Core Policies 1 and 2 of the CS would be reduced by the fact that permission for a dwelling on the site of the barn already exists. I note that Core Policy 60 of the CS seeks to reduce the need to travel and that the site is not particularly accessible by alternative modes of transport to the private car.... However, again the proposed dwelling would be in the same location as the 'fallback position' therefore any harm in this regard would also be diminished."*¹

5.10 Where there is a greater than theoretical possibility that the fall-back position would be implemented, Inspectors are only assessing if the proposed replacement dwelling would result in any significant impacts over and above the permitted scheme.

5.11 As outlined below, the new dwelling would not result in any significant impacts over and above the permitted scheme.

5 YEAR HOUSING LAND SUPPLY

5.12 It is common ground that Wiltshire Council cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply.

5.13 Paragraph 11d) of the NPPF states where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- 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.

5.14 The proposal does not impact any protected areas or assets of particular importance, and the previous appeal has demonstrated that there would be no other harm arising from the development. Whilst the benefit of a single new dwelling would be modest, the addition of even a single dwelling would be

¹ Appeal Decision APP/Y3940/W/18/3200095

helpful to the shortfall and any adverse impacts would be very small, certainly when compared to those that would arise from the fallback decision.

- 5.15 For the above reasons, the principle of development should be considered acceptable, despite its technical conflict with Core Policy 1 and 2 of the Development Plan.

CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA

- 5.16 Core Policy 51 requires development to protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character. It also requires proposals to demonstrate that landscape character is conserved and where possible enhanced through sensitive design, landscape mitigation and enhancement measures.

- 5.17 Core Policy 57 requires a high standard of design for all new developments. Amongst other criteria, new developments must show that they enhance local distinctiveness; respond positively to the existing townscape; be sympathetic to and conserve historic buildings; and have regard to the impact on amenities of existing occupiers.

- 5.18 As outlined within the Officer Report of application PL/2023/08703, the site is in an area known as 'Amesbury Down', which is also designated as a Special Landscape Area. It is a tranquil, rural and unsettled landscape, which provides the backdrop to the Upper Avon Chalk River Valley character area to the west. It also acts as a buffer between MoD Boscombe Down/Amesbury (to the east of the A345) and the Stonehenge World Heritage Site (WHS) (1.8 kilometres to the west). The only development within the area of the site is North Farm House, a couple of houses on the edge of Great Durnford and Chemring/High Post (to the south) otherwise the site and existing buildings are situated in a landscape that is relatively unspoilt. As was established as part of the assessment of the last/withdrawn replacement dwelling application, the site is however quite prominent in both longer distance and short distance views along the road leading from Amesbury.

- 5.19 The existing site is occupied by an agricultural barn, which has planning permission to be converted into a residential dwelling. As described by Officers, "the existing grain store is of limited architectural merit" but its "functional design" is typical of the rural landscape. The extant consent involves the conversion of the building into a dwelling with alterations to its external appearance.

- 5.20 Although domestication of the site would be appreciated from the public domain through the extant consent, the LPA considered the previous planning applications acceptable because the dwelling

maintained an agricultural visage. A farm-house style dwelling was proposed in 2023 but was not considered acceptable since the agrarian character of the site would be lost.

5.21 It is now proposed to demolish the existing buildings and to erect a purpose-built dwelling. However, whilst the current proposal differs in design to that approved under PL/2023/08703, it remains akin to a barn conversion and therefore, similarly preserves the agricultural appearance of the site. If anything, the proposed development improves upon the character of the immediate site by proposing a dwelling akin to a more traditional barn found within the landscape, rather than a conversion of a modern agricultural building, which the LPA accept is of limited architectural merit.

5.22 The proposed siting and overall site layout remain very similar to the extant consent and therefore, there would not be any undue harm or domestication of the site over and above the existing permission. The garden area is in the same position as that approved and additional screening is proposed on the eastern boundary. The scale of the dwelling is comparable to the existing, meaning that it would not be more prominent in the landscape and the materials proposed will continue to be muted and vernacular.

5.23 Overall, it is considered that the proposed development will improve the appearance of the site by providing a development that is akin to a traditional, vernacular barn conversion.

RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

5.24 Core Strategy Policy 57 '*Ensuring High Quality Design & Space Shaping*' requires development to ensure the impact on the amenities of existing occupants/neighbours is acceptable and also ensure that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself.

5.25 The proposed development makes effective use of land by providing a high standard of living accommodation and amenity space. The proposed dwelling is also positioned in a relatively isolated position where neighbours are sufficiently far for there not to be any impact. Consequently, it is not considered that there would be any impact to existing or future occupiers.

HIGHWAYS

5.26 Core Strategy Policy 61 requires new development to be located and designed to reduce the need to travel particularly by private car, and to encourage the use of sustainable transport alternatives.

5.27 The site has extant planning permission for a four-bedroom dwelling and the proposed will also have equal number of bedrooms.

5.28 Wiltshire's Car Parking Strategy (2011) stipulates a minimum of 3 car parking spaces for dwellings of 4 or more bedrooms. The proposed development provides ample car parking and manoeuvring space for cars to turn to allow entry from and exit to the public highway in a forward gear.

5.29 Under application PL/2022/08110, the Highways Officer raised no objection subject to the development provided the correct visibility splays. The Officer commented that according to accident data, no accidents have occurred in the vicinity of this site. The existing access is currently utilised by agricultural vehicles which tend to be larger vehicles and slower moving. Taking account of the existing use and types of vehicles compared to the proposed use and types of vehicles, and speeds of vehicles using the road, it is considered that the vehicle access and visibility demonstrated for the previous application is adequate for the proposal.

5.30 The same comments and conditions would apply to this scheme given that the scheme is a re-design of the extant consent.

ECOLOGY & TREES

5.31 Core Strategy Policy 50 '*Biodiversity and Geodiversity*' requires proposals to demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale. The policy also requires all proposals to incorporate appropriate mitigation measures to avoid and reduce disturbance of sensitive wildlife species and habitats. All development should also seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity.

5.32 The existing building has been found to have a negligible impact on bats due to its corrugated metal roofing. However, ecology on site would be enhanced on the site through the introduction of new landscaping. The proposal would therefore accord with Core Policy 50 and the wider objectives of the NPPF to conserve and enhance the natural environment.

RIVER AVON - PHOSPHATE

5.33 Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework requires that the planning authority ensures the protection of important habitats and species in relation to development and seeks enhancement for the benefit of biodiversity through the planning system.

5.34 The site is within the catchment of the River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC). SACs are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2019. These are a network of sites designated for supporting habitats or species of high nature conservation importance in the European context. Any activity that has a detrimental effect on these European sites is made an offence under the Regulations. As this site falls within the catchment of the River Avon SAC, the proposal has the potential to cause adverse effects alone or in combination with other developments through the discharge of phosphorus in wastewater.

5.35 In the absence of national guidelines, or local guidelines for Wiltshire, Somerset Council's *Interim Guidelines on Small Scale Thresholds and Nutrient Neutrality Principles for the Somerset levels and Moors Ramsar Catchment* are being accepted as a model of good practice defining whether a project will have a likely significant effect on this catchment (**Appendix A**).

5.36 Within Somerset Council's guidelines there is an exception to the need to plan mitigation for discharges of phosphorous to the ground by package treatment plants. To demonstrate that the development would generate 'insignificant levels of phosphorus' eight criterion need to be met. Table 1 below demonstrates that each of these are met:

Table 1 – Small scale Thresholds Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Assessment
Small discharges to ground i.e. less than 2m ³ /day that are within the surface or groundwater catchment of a designated site will present a low risk that the phosphorus will have a significant effect on the designated site where certain conditions are met.	The applicant proposes the use of a Rewatec Solido SMART + P package treatment plant. This has a hydraulic daily load of 0.6m ³ /day.
a) The drainage field is more than 50m from the designated site boundary (or sensitive interest feature)	Criteria met – the drainage field is more than 50m from the designated site boundary.
b) The drainage field is more than 40m from any surface water feature e.g. ditch, drain, watercourse	Criteria met – the drainage field is more than 40m from a surface water feature.

c) The drainage field in an area with a slope no greater than 15%	Criteria met – the drainage field slopes at a gradient of 3.84%
d) The drainage field is in an area where the high water table groundwater depth is at least 2m below the surface at all times	Criteria met – Wilshire's SFRA shows groundwater in the area to be at least 5m below surface level.
e) The drainage field will not be subject to significant flooding, e.g. it is not in flood zone 2 or 3 and ;	Criteria met – the drainage field is within Flood Zone 1.
f) There are no other known factors which would expedite the transport of phosphorus for example fissured geology, known sewer flooding, conditions in the soil/geology that would cause remobilisation phosphorus, presence of mineshafts, etc and ;	Criteria met – no known features existing on site.
g) To ensure that there is no significant in combination effect, the septic tank should be at least 200m from any other septic tank.	The drainage field is more than 200m from any other septic tank.
h) The percolation test has been performed of the proposed location of the drainage field with the resulting value lying within the required range under Building Regulations 2010, which specify an average Vp value of between 12 and 100.	Percolation test not yet undertaken, but it is very likely this would be passed given Soilsmap shows the site as 'shallow lime rich soils over chalk or limestone' which are 'freely draining'.

5.37 When assessing this information in consideration of the last application on the site (PL/2023/08703), the council's Ecologist produced a HRA which concluded that the application is not likely to have significant impacts on the River Avon SAC Catchment, and an AA is not required. There has been no change of circumstances which should change this conclusion.

CONCLUSION

6.1 This application seeks planning permission for the demolition of a building, (which has an extant permission for a residential conversion), and the erection of one detached dwelling.

6.2 The site currently benefits from an extant consent to convert the existing barn into a large four-bedroom dwelling. This Statement has demonstrated that the Applicant has taken into consideration and have overcome the LPA's previous concerns regarding a purpose-built dwelling on sit. In particular:

- *The proposed dwelling remains akin to a barn conversion*
- *The dwelling remains in the same position as the extant consent*
- *The agrarian character of the site is preserved*

6.3 Accordingly, this Statement has demonstrated that the proposal will not have any significant visual, landscape, ecological, amenity or highways effects that would warrant refusal. As such, we commend this proposal to you.

Appendix A - Interim guidelines on small scale thresholds and nutrient neutrality principles for the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar catchment.