

Planning in Principle Justification Statement

PROPOSAL: Planning in Principle for One Self-Build Dwelling

SITE: Land at Seagry Hill, Sutton Benger, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 4SA

1. Introduction and Purpose of the Statement

This Planning in Principle (PiP) justification statement supports an application for one self-build residential dwelling on land at Seagry Hill, Sutton Benger. The purpose of the statement is to demonstrate that the site is suitable in principle for residential development, having regard to the PiP tests of:

- Location
- Land use
- Amount of development

The statement also addresses the site's relationship to the settlement, accessibility, environmental considerations, and alignment with relevant Wiltshire Core Strategy policies and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It further explains how the proposal contributes positively to local housing needs, particularly in supporting genuine self-build delivery, which is a material consideration under national policy. In addition to setting out the positive case, likely objections that may be raised have been outlined and addressed.

2. Site Description and Context

The site is a small, contained parcel of land immediately adjoining existing residential development on Seagry Hill, close to and visually read as part of the existing built form of Sutton Benger, a designated Large Village in the Wiltshire Core Strategy. Key locational characteristics include:

- Direct adjacency to existing residential properties, forming a logical and contained extension of the settlement edge. The plot sits closely adjacent to the built form of Sutton Benger, a Large Village in the Wiltshire Core Strategy.
- The site has a small slope towards the south, with natural and built boundaries that limit wider landscape visibility appearing as visually enclosed.
- Proximity to village services, including the primary school, public house, church, village hall, and local employment opportunities.
- Safe and direct access from Seagry Hill, with good visibility and low engineering requirements.
- Location within Flood Zone 1, with no heritage designations, ecological constraints, or contamination indicators.

The site is therefore well-related to the existing settlement pattern and capable of accommodating a single dwelling without adverse landscape or environmental effects, therefore inherently suitable for a single dwelling.

3. Suitability of the Site for Development

3.1 Relationship to the Settlement

The site sits immediately adjacent to established residential development and forms a natural rounding-off of the village edge. It does not project into open countryside nor create an isolated or sporadic pattern of development. Instead, it represents a logical, proportionate, and policy-supported infill opportunity consistent with the character and grain of Sutton Benger.

3.2 Accessibility and Sustainable Travel

The site benefits from:

- **Pedestrian access** to village facilities within comfortable walking distance.
- **Bus services** connecting Sutton Benger to Chippenham and Swindon.
- **Short travel distances** to Chippenham railway station and employment centres.

For a single dwelling, the accessibility credentials are strong and fully consistent with the NPPF's emphasis on locating development where sustainable travel options exist.

3.3 Infrastructure and Services

A single dwelling places negligible demand on local infrastructure. There are:

- No capacity constraints identified in local utilities.
- No education or healthcare impacts of significance at this scale.
- No highway capacity issues, with safe access achievable.

The proposal is therefore infrastructure-neutral.

3.4 Recent Developments in Seagry Hill

More recently garages to the rear of No 1 Seagry Hill have been demolished and a new dwelling erected on a small parcel of land, - ref PL/2021/03174 Approved 23/6/2021 Replacement of existing domestic Garages with single storey dwelling. Also approved ref 16/10934/FUL Land Adjacent Old Telephone Exchange, Seagry Hill, Change of use of land to one gypsy and traveller pitch, the erection of a day room, siting of a static home together with space for the parking of two cars, a mobile home, space for a garden and the siting of a cess pit. Approved 2/8/2017

4. Policy Alignment

4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The proposal aligns with the NPPF in the following ways:

- **Boosting housing supply** - through small-scale, deliverable development.
- **Supporting self-build and custom-build housing** which LPAs must take positive steps to facilitate.
- **Making effective use of land** in sustainable locations.
- **Focusing growth in existing settlements** where services and infrastructure already exist.
- **Delivering high-quality, sustainable homes.**

The NPPF places significant weight on small sites and self-build opportunities, both of which are directly met by this proposal.

4.2 Wiltshire Core Strategy

The proposal is consistent with the following policies:

- **Core Policy 1 & 2 – Settlement Strategy**
Sutton Benger is a Large Village, where infill and small-scale development is supported. The site is directly adjacent to the settlement and functions as a natural extension.
- **Core Policy 57 – Ensuring High Quality Design**
A single dwelling can be sensitively designed to reflect local vernacular and enhance the settlement edge.
- **Core Policy 41 – Sustainable Construction and Low-Carbon Energy**
Self-build homes typically exceed minimum standards with enhanced energy performance.
- **Core Policy 45 – Meeting Wiltshire's Housing Needs**
The proposal contributes to meeting local housing needs, including self-build demand.

The proposal is therefore fully aligned with the spatial strategy and policy framework for sustainable growth in Wiltshire.

5. Contribution to Local Housing Needs and Self-Build Delivery

The proposal delivers a genuine self-build dwelling, directly supporting:

- The Government's objective to diversify the housing market.
- The LPA's statutory duty under the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015.
- Local demand for individual, high-quality homes that reflect local character.

Self-build homes typically:

- Deliver higher environmental performance.
- Support local trades and supply chains.
- Provide long-term community investment, self-builders more likely to remain in the area.

Given the modest scale and immediate deliverability of the site, the proposal represents a high-value, low-impact contribution to local housing supply.

6. Environmental and Technical Considerations

- **Flood Risk:** The site lies entirely within **Flood Zone I**, the lowest category of flood risk.
- **Ecology:** No designated ecological sites are affected, and the scale of development allows for biodiversity enhancements.
- **Landscape:** The site is visually contained and will not harm the wider landscape setting.
- **Heritage:** There are no heritage assets affected.
- **Highways:** Safe access is achievable with no material impact on highway safety.

There are no environmental or technical constraints that would preclude the principle of development.

7. Amount of Development

The application seeks PiP for one dwelling only. This is the smallest possible scale of residential development and is entirely proportionate to the site and settlement context. It ensures:

- Minimal landscape impact
 - No infrastructure burden
 - High deliverability
 - Full compatibility with the PiP framework
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8. Anticipated Planning Considerations and Applicant Responses

The following sets out the main planning matters that may arise and response:

"The site lies outside the defined settlement boundary."

- For PiP, the key question is whether the site represents a suitable location for housing, rather than its position relative to an older boundary line.
- The NPPF supports small-scale growth in sustainable, edge-of-settlement locations.
- Sutton Benger is identified in Core Policy I as a Large Village capable of accommodating infill and small-scale development.
- The site sits comfortably within the area's built context and reads as a natural rounding-off.

Conclusion: The site meets the PiP location test and is consistent with the spatial strategy, notwithstanding its position outside the boundary.

"The proposal would result in ribbon development or harm rural character."

- The plot is visually contained by existing development and forms part of the established frontage along Seagry Hill.
- It does not extend the settlement into open countryside or create a new projection.
- A single dwelling represents a modest, low-impact form of development.
- The site's enclosure and topography limit any wider landscape effects.

Conclusion: The proposal represents an acceptable and logical completion of the existing adjoining development edge rather than ribbon development.

"The site is not sustainable."

- The site is within walking distance of key village services including the school, pub, church, village hall, recreation ground, and local employment.
- Bus services provide links to Chippenham and Swindon.
- The NPPF acknowledges that rural areas rely on a range of transport modes and supports development that maintains village vitality.
- For a single dwelling, the level of accessibility is appropriate.

Conclusion: The site is suitably sustainable for a development of this scale.

"The development would place pressure on local infrastructure."

- One dwelling generates very limited demand on utilities, education, healthcare, and highways.
- There is no evidence of capacity issues that would be materially affected.
- The NPPF requires proportionate evidence; infrastructure concerns at this scale would not meet that threshold.

Conclusion: Infrastructure impacts are negligible for a single dwelling.

"The proposal could harm biodiversity or landscape character."

- The site is undesignated, contains no priority habitats, and lies outside ecological networks.
- A single dwelling provides opportunities for net biodiversity gain through planting and habitat features.
- The site is visually contained, with no wider landscape effects anticipated.

Conclusion: There are no ecological or landscape constraints that would prevent PiP.

"The proposal is premature pending the new Local Plan."

- Emerging plans carry limited weight until they reach an advanced stage.
- PiP decisions must be made against the adopted development plan and national policy.
- The site's suitability is not dependent on emerging boundaries or allocations.

Conclusion: Prematurity is not a relevant consideration at PiP stage.

"Self build is not a material justification."

- The Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 places a statutory duty on LPAs to permission sufficient plots to meet demand.
- The NPPF requires support for self build opportunities.
- Wiltshire's register continues to show unmet demand.
- A single, deliverable plot contributes directly to meeting this requirement.

Conclusion: Self build status is a material consideration that carries positive weight.

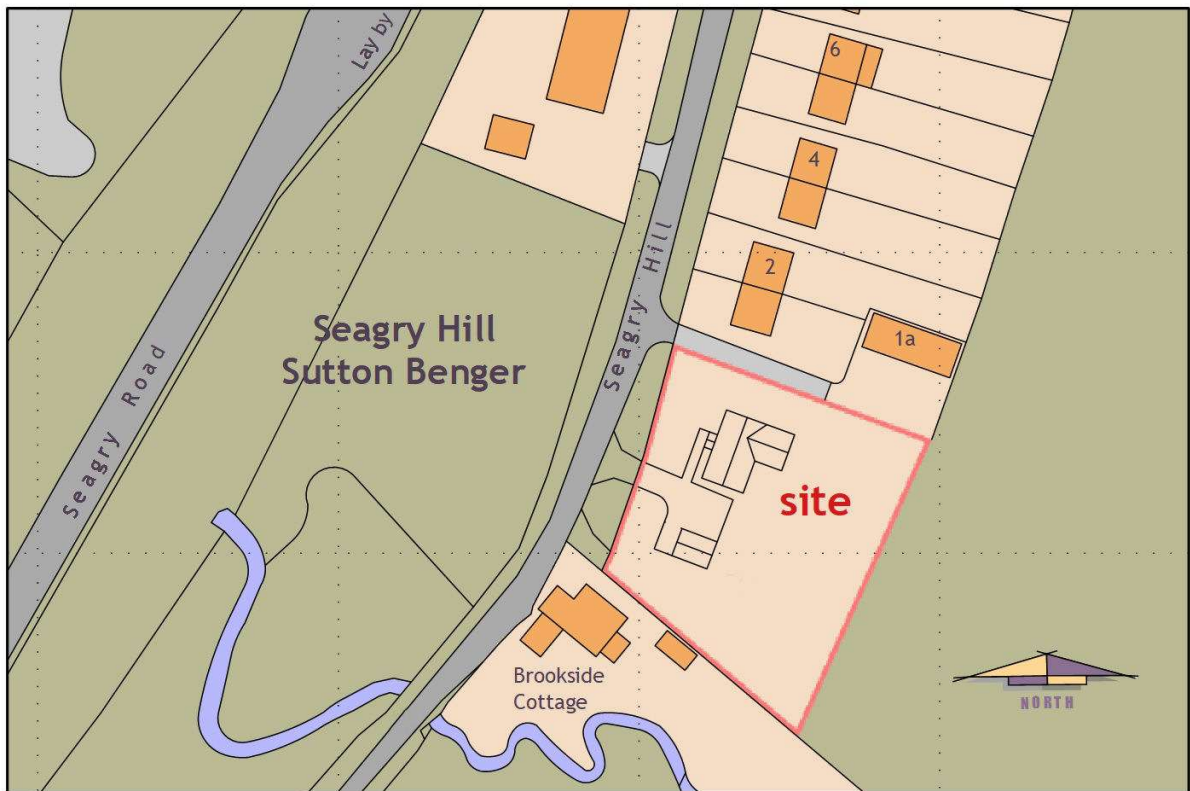
Conclusion

The proposed self build dwelling at Seagry Hill is suitable in principle for residential development. The site is:

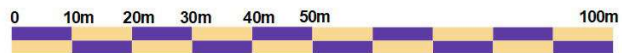
- Well located, close to the adjoining built form of Sutton Benger
- Sustainable, with good access to local services
- Unconstrained by environmental or technical matters
- Consistent with the NPPF and Wiltshire Core Strategy
- Supportive of local housing needs, including self build provision

The proposal represents a modest, well-integrated addition to the village and meets the PiP tests of **location**, **land use**, and **amount**. Planning in Principle can therefore be supported.

Additional information in support of this application:



Location Plan



Flood risk: site is outside of zones 2 and 3 (blue colours)



Proposed arrangement for illustration purposes only; final design to be confirmed through further planning application and detailed submissions.



Google Earth view of area



Google Earth view of the site



Site frontage looking south from Seagry Hill



Site frontage looking north from Brookside Cottage



Properties to the north of the site on Seagry Hill



Seagry Road and Seagry Hill junction on east side, Cycle/footaway on east side of road

End of Statement