



Bourne Valley Associates Ltd

**Planning Statement to support a
Full Planning Application
For
The replacement of grass surface by permeable
surface, and erection of replacement fencing and
gates at existing tennis court
For
Dr Douglas and Mrs Charlotte Veitch
at
Netheravon House,
Lower Road, Netheravon, Salisbury, Wiltshire,
SP4 9SY**

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Project: Works to tennis court, Netheravon House

Reference: 05800-02

Date: 30th April 2026

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Issue 1.0

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1. Introduction

This statement is submitted by Bourne Valley Associates, in support of an application to Wiltshire Council (WC) for Full Planning Permission for the construction of works to an existing tennis court, on behalf of Dr Douglas Veitch and Mrs Charlotte Veitch. They have the land on a long lease¹ from the Ministry of Defence, which owns it. The court is within the grounds of Netheravon House, Lower Road, Netheravon, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP4 9SY.

2. The Application

This application seeks to replace the grass surface of an existing tennis court with a permeable, all-weather surface, and to erect a new high fence around the court, with new access through a replacement gate. The application site is shown on the submitted location plan, Drawing 05800-00, Sheet 05. The historic grounds of Netheravon House were divided in two through an application to develop the northern part of the site. There were previously two tennis courts associated with the house. One went to each of the two parts, after division. There has been a gap between the courts and the red line shows accurately the boundary line of the tenancy, the edge of which corresponds to the extent of the court.

Works will only be at and immediately adjacent to the existing court, but the red line has been drawn wider to allow for access for construction, as is described in this statement.

3. The Application site

Figure 1 shows the tennis court (and that adjacent to it) marked by the red arrow. It is clear that the Ordnance Survey has recognised it as an established feature. The court is some 100m to the East of the House, and adjacent to the River Avon.

¹ The lease has a further 975 years to run.

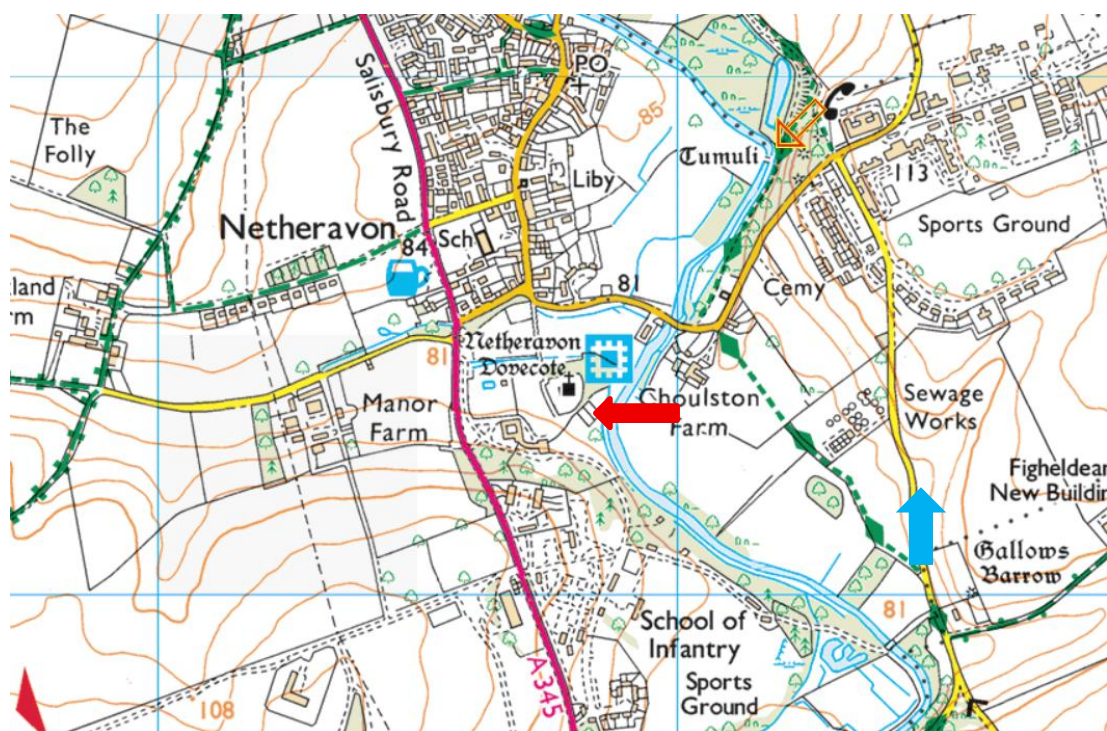


Figure 1 - Application site location

It is not certain when the tennis courts were established. However, a photograph taken, we understand, in the late 1930s, shows the courts, as can be seen in the bottom right of Figure 2.



Figure 2 - Photograph from 1930s showing tennis court



The land then was managed by an earlier version of the Ministry of Defence, and some of their buildings can be seen on the left of the image.

The courts were present in 1973, as the abstract from the 1973 OS 1:2,500 map shown in Figure 3 makes clear.

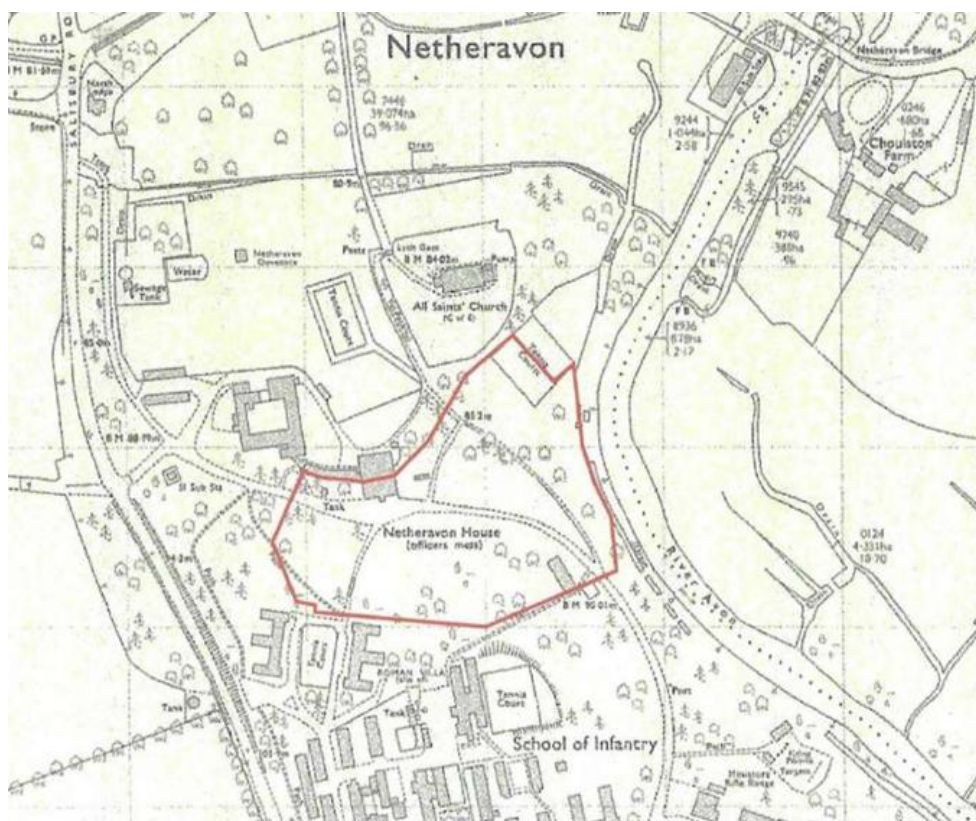


Figure 3 - OS 1:2,500 map of 1973²

Subsequently, the court continued to be in use, and it is visible in aerial photographs of at least 2002 to the present day. The court was not in use in 2021 when the applicants took on the tenancy. At that time, there was full height fencing around the court, but it was in a poor state of repair and was dangerous. It was therefore removed and replaced by low fencing, on a temporary basis. The high fence around the adjacent court, which had a hard surface, is now used to demark a chicken coop on that land.

Figure 4 is a photograph of the court from 2022, with the fencing still in place. This image is looking towards All Saints Church, which cannot be seen. Figure 5 provides a clear impression of the poor state of repair of that fencing. The fencing around the adjacent court is now rusty and unsightly.

² Copied from AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK BASED ASSESSMENT STUDY OF LAND AT NETHERAVON HOUSE, NETHERAVON, WILTSHIRE by Neville Hall, March 2026.



Figure 4 - Existing court in 2022, before removal of previous fencing



Figure 5 - Detail of poor state of previous fencing



Figure 6 shows an aerial photograph taken in July 2025 and thus representative of the current position. It is evident that court has still been maintained. It contrasts with the adjacent former court, which is no longer used, and where woody vegetation has colonised the former lawn. Even with the hard work of the applicants, the grass court has proved difficult to maintain. The increased summer heat withers the grass and, without any natural water provision, watering the court proves complex. Moreover, rabbits and squirrels make maintenance impossible as they dig it up constantly despite applying wire to limit their access.

Given this evidence, we contend firmly that there has been lengthy and continuous use of the site as a tennis court. The use has thus been established, and there is no need to apply for a change of use of land. Therefore, this application is limited to measures which would enable it to be used regularly; safely, and with convenience. That is: a better surface and replacement fencing and gate. So, the issues are whether the design of the surface and the fencing are appropriate within the setting of two listed buildings.

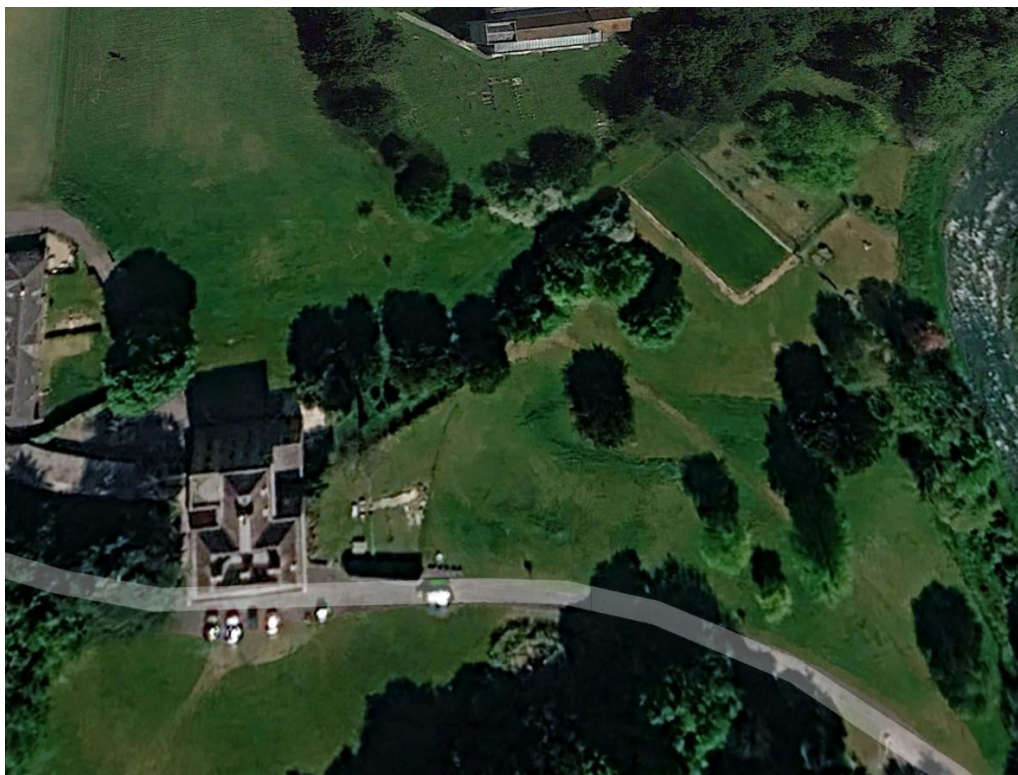


Figure 6 - 2025 aerial photograph showing tennis court in relation to Netheravon House and River Avon

4. Relationship to Heritage Assets

The tennis court lies outside the boundary of the Netheravon Conservation area. Figure 7 shows a map of the southern part of the designated conservation area, copied from the Conservation Area Statement for the village. The boundary is shown by the blue line. Therefore, the residential permitted development rights at the site are not reduced because it lies outside “protected” land. Moreover, there is no requirement to consider the impact on the character of the conservation area.



The plan also shows the relationship of the application site with listed buildings, which are marked in red on the plan. There are two that are relevant to the consideration of the proposal. The first is Netheravon House itself. The second is All Saints Church. The impact on the listed stable block is not considered material as there is no ownership or visual connection between the stable block (now converted to residential) and the site.

Section 9 describes the significance of the two listed buildings (heritage assets) and considers the impact of the proposals on them, focussing primarily on the impact on their settings.

There is no reason to apply for listed building consent for the works. The court is not physically attached to either listed building. One can readily argue that the courts do not form part of the curtilage of Netheravon House, given that they are some distance from the property and not normally used for everyday purposes, but the issue is academic, as we recognise that it is proper to consider the potential impact on the setting of the house, and we have done that, as well as considering if there is an impact on the setting of the church.

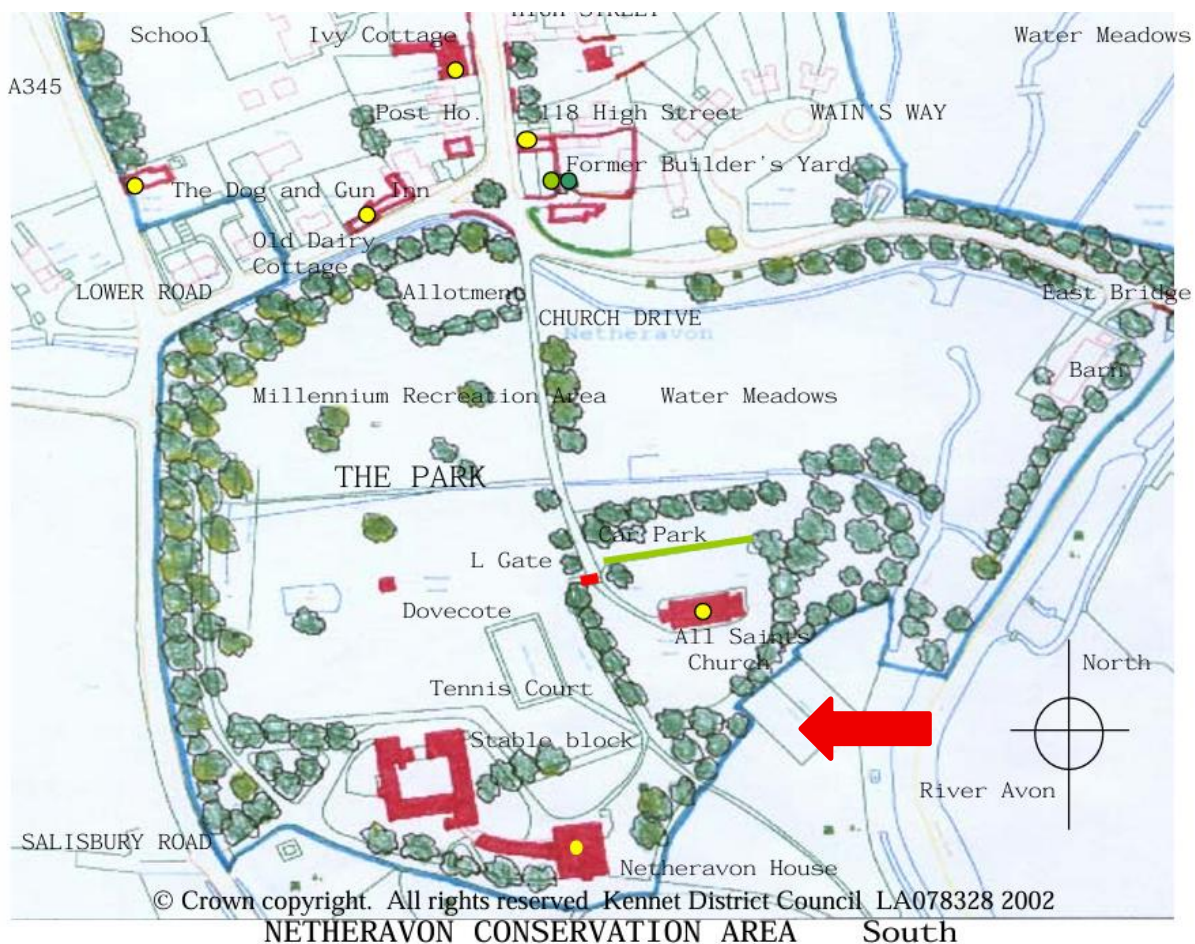


Figure 7 - Map of southern part of Netheravon Conservation Area



5. Planning History

As described earlier, the courts have been in their present position for almost a century, and therefore precede the introduction of the Town and Country Planning legislation. There have been no planning applications for any proposals at the tennis court.

There have been many applications associated with the House and with the previously related former stables. Most of these are not material to this application and we do not set them out here. However, it is appropriate to provide a degree of context, and two principal applications are relevant. The first was the permission in 2002 (K/43524/L) to convert the House into two dwellings. That permission led to the subdivision of the historic land tenure, as well as of the House, so that each part received a court each. The court nearer the house (south-western side) remained with that part of the house occupied by the applicants, and that is the subject of this application.

The second material application was K/43531 which allowed the conservation of the former stable block/officers' quarters into housing. This permission was subsequently amended a number of times, but the permission, granted in 2003, established the practical sub-division and redevelopment of the northern part of the site.

6. Proposed Development

A detailed block plan showing the location and form of the proposals is provided in Drawing 05800-00-A, Sheet 06.

The concept of the proposed development has been set out above. The works will be undertaken by a recognised expert in sports facility design and implementation, Sovereign Sports. They have set out specifications to direct their proposals, and we have depicted them in our detailed drawings. Sovereign-Sports are SAPCA approved³. So, it will adhere to code of practice for the construction and maintenance of tennis courts and it is officially supported by the Lawn Tennis Association.

There will be a minor increase in size of footprint of the court, in order to correct minor inconsistencies in the previous court layout, to correct falls in levels, and to provide adequate support for the new fencing. In order to give space around the court side (largely due to the fact these are now two separate courts rather than part of the same set up), the applicants reasonably seek to build up the side closest to the house by about 1m. Much of the material will come from the spoil additional stone from deconstruct the existing court surface. However, the increase in size will be negligible in terms of impact on the setting of the two listed buildings.

Drawing 05800-00-B, Sheet 07 not only shows the fence elevations, but also provided technical information about the fence.

In terms of court construction, the ground will be treated and levelled before establishing a sound perimeter and setting out the court with crushed, rolled stone to establish a flat and regular surface on which a surface coat of asphalt will be laid. The designers/contractors make clear, in their

³ SAPCA is the professional trade body for sports facility construction.



specifications, that the foundations and surface layer will be porous. As we comment in Section 7, we recognise the importance of ensuring that there is no rapid run-off during heavy rain events. The proposed surface will meet the exacting requirements of the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), even though the upgraded court will be used for the enjoyment of the applicants and their guests and not for commercial events.

The asphalt will be painted two tones of green to facilitate easy visibility between the active court of play and the surrounding area. Figure 8 is a photograph provided by the contractors to illustrate the potential appearance of the court. White lines will be used, as opposed to the frequently used yellow, which could be strident in this context. The fencing will be black. Details of the fencing can be seen in Drawing 05800-00-A, Sheet 07. In that illustration the fencing appears somewhat “intense”, but Figure 8 gives a better visual representation of how it would be perceived. The fence would be 2.75m high, which accords with LTA guidance. The single gate is in the centre of the South-West elevation, nearest the house.



Figure 8 - Example of tennis court in the same colour and form

Clearly, there will be specialised material brought onto the site, but there will be no material exported. In order to facilitate the construction, part of the car park in front of Netheravon House will be used as a compound where lorries will deposit the construction material. This procedure is proposed so that smaller machinery can carry material down to the site, thereby protecting the ground from the tarmac drive stretching South from the House across to the area of the court. Although the grounds are not within the Netheravon conservation area, the applicants consider they have a duty of care over the grounds and will seek to apply good practice to protect it. The applicants are content to comply with a condition on planning permission that places a time restriction on the temporary use of the car park.



Any spoil from the site, removed prior to the construction works, will be used within the grounds to remove undulations in the slope. It is important to recognise the degree of spoil cannot be determined prior to works commencing, but it is likely to be limited. That part of the grounds over which the lightweight machinery will run and that where spoil could be spread do not themselves have any historic significance, other than their juxtaposition to the House. Parts which are planted or contain bulbs are readily identifiable, and will be avoided.

7. Flood risk assessment

Figure 9 shows that the tennis court, marked with the red arrow, is in Flood Zone 1, despite its close proximity to the River Avon, which immediately to the right of the image. Therefore, a flood risk assessment is not required, especially as the site has a very low risk of flooding from surface water. Those areas with a higher risk of flooding - Zones 2 and 3 – are marked with mid blue and dark blue colours respectively.

Nonetheless, the applicants are taking a responsible stance towards flood risk by ensuring the creation of the new court surface does not lead to increased flood risk downstream. The use of a permeable surface ensures that rainwater percolates directly into the soil beneath the court and does not run off at time of spate. In any event, the River Avon is a chalk stream and is therefore less “flashy” than many rivers in lowland UK, so the impact of climate change on the behaviour of the river is less marked than most rivers.

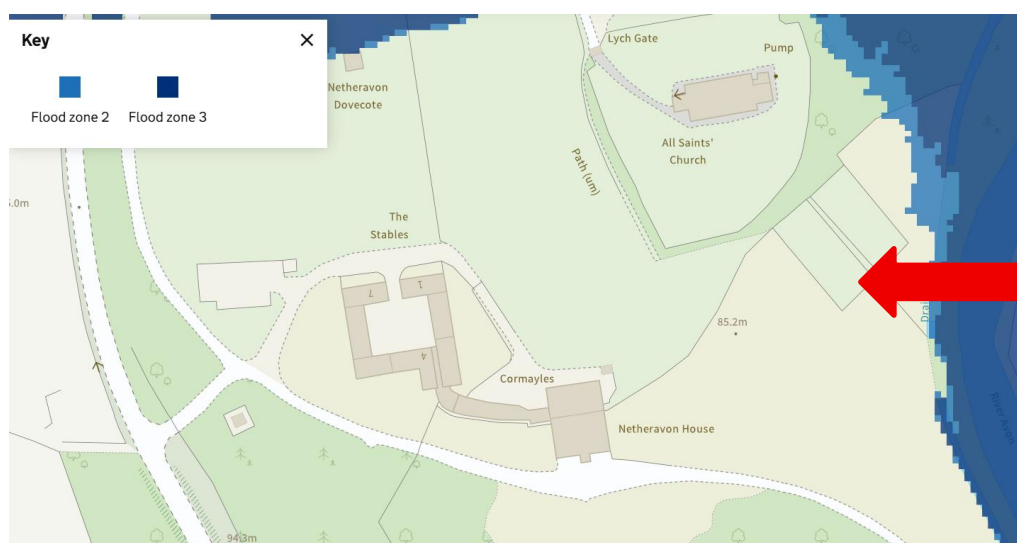


Figure 9 - Relationship of tennis courts with Flood Zones 2 and 3

8. Impact on Landscape Character and Visual Amenity

In considering minor, householder, works such as this, if the principle of the type of development is either accepted or, as in this case, established, the impact of the specific design on the area's landscape character and the impact on amenity of nearby properties or users of rights of way is a major factor in whether proposals are acceptable. In this case, the degree of overlap between this



factor and the impact on heritage assets is considerable. However, given the weight afforded to the latter in national and local policies, a separate section is devoted to it.

In essence, as there has been a court at the site for many decades, the factors to consider are the colour, form and height of the fence (though the height will be no higher than previously) and the colour and form of the “hard” surface, in comparison with grass.

Landscape Character

The site falls within the Salisbury Avon Valley Landscape type of the Landscape Assessment undertaken for the former Kennet District Council in 2008. That document describes the area thus:

“the whole area has an essentially tranquil, intimate and pastoral character within which only small-scale, sensitively-designed development, associated with existing built form, could be successfully accommodated without adverse landscape impacts;”. It therefore recommends a “conserve” strategy for this part of the valley.

We accept the description and the strategy. We argue strongly that the limited scale and type of development would be both “small-scale” and “associated with built form” and thus accords with the landscape character.

The impact on landscape character is thus considered to be negligible.

Visual impact

The impact of the proposals on the enjoyment of the house and of All Saints Church is set out in Section 9. Other than Netheravon House, there are no residential properties nearby that gain a view of the site. There is one property to the North-East, Choulston Farm, but it is about 200m away and, more significantly, there are belts of trees between the two. There is a public footpath running along the eastern side of the river (NAV018). It is here coincidental with the long-distance route, the Pewsey Avon Trail, and so impacts on its users are material. However, it is over 200m away at its nearest point, and separated by the river. Therefore, the impact significance is considered to be minor to negligible, especially as no new land use is being created.

The occupiers of the adjacent land, who use the former tennis court as a chicken coop, and pass the application site to access their poultry, have been advised of the proposal, and have no objection. They cannot see the court from their house.

9. Impact on heritage assets

As stated previously, the two material heritage assets are Netheravon House and All Saints Church. We set out below both descriptions of the historic assets and an assessment of the impact of this minor development on them, bearing in mind there is clearly no physical impact. The principal consideration is whether there is an impact on the setting of the two assets. In drawing our conclusions, we have followed Historic England’s *“The Setting of Heritage Assets - Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition)”*. That advice extols a proportionate approach to decision-making. While the importance of the assets here should not be



underplayed, the advice also makes clear that the significance of an impact should also take account of whether “*proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate (assets).*”

Netheravon House is a very attractive Grade II* listed building.

Its citation reads as follows:

NETHERAVON SU 14 NW - 9/101 Netheravon House II* Large villa and hunting box, now officer's mess for Support Weapons Training Wing. After 1734, for Henry Somerset, Duke of Beaufort, on the site of a Roman villa. Extended 1791 by John Soane for M. Hector Beach. Brick with tiled roofs. Three storeys and cellar, 5 x 3 bays, double pile plan with entrance hall and stair flanked by main reception rooms on south front. Central door with Ionic portico, glazed at sides. Twelve-pane sashes with gauged brick heads and raised stone keys. Stone plat band between ground and first floors. Stone cornice and brick parapet. Six-panelled door in eared architrave. Sun fire mark No 655933. 1791 extension at rear, 3 bays, 3 storeys with single storey side rooms, extended upwards early C20. Some windows false. Sinuous Tuscan colonnade with rooms at back leads from house to stables (q.v.). Interior: Large entrance hall has very fine dogleg stair with 3 turned balusters to each tread. Flanking rooms fully panelled with chair-rail and good plaster cornices, the muntins raised above the panels. Fireplaces replaced c1930's. North east room has cornice only, and inlaid marble fireplace. First floor rooms on south front also panelled with cornices. Soane's addition contains secondary stair, plain, and one room to each floor, now mess room on ground floor. Servants' quarters in attics boarded. The house was built for coursing and hawking, and the grounds were laid out by Thomas Wright and published in Universal Architecture in 1755 and 1758.

Listing NGR: SU1473948285

The listing took place in 1986, and thus prior to the house's sub-division and to considerable works being approved. Therefore, the successive local planning authorities have taken a considered, but pragmatic approach to proposals affecting it. The house has seen many different owners and uses. It was built for the Duke of Beaufort, but was acquired by the then War Department in 1898. From 1904 until the outbreak of the First World War, a cavalry school operated in the house and stables. The site was taken over by the Machine Gun School and, finally, by the Support Weapons Wing, with the house serving as the officers' mess until the closure of Avon Camp in the 1990s, when the property was sold⁴ by the MoD.

The citation does not refer to significant external features and there is no reference to the grounds being significant. Although the grounds were laid out by the landscape architect and astronomer Thomas Wright and published in Universal Architecture in 1755 and 1758, there is little of interest on the southern side of the property, and the fields between the House and village hold a greater interest.

An important factor in “*the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated*”, as para 19 of the Historic England's advice puts it, is the position of the asset. In this case, the House is on a “bluff”, an elevated position above the river. If it were not for considerable tree cover on the flanks of the valley, the house would be dominant feature. Tree cover nearby, much of it planted, has increased over the centuries, so that the appreciation of the house's position and form is not clear from many directions. We seek to show

⁴ Actually, on a 999 year lease.



below that the modifications to the tennis court would not impact upon either its significance or one's ability to interpret it.

What would be the impact of the revised tennis court structure on the setting of the house, bearing in mind that the court itself would have been a familiar structure, even if it had become somewhat untidy, with rusty fencing? Figure 10 shows the house, and it is clear that the main views from it are to South (as in the image) and to the North. There are windows to the side, as the photograph shows, but views of the tennis courts are limited.



Figure 10 - Netheravon House, from the South East

Figure 11 is an aerial photograph showing the relationship of the house with the court. The red arrow shows the court. The yellow arrows show the potential views from the East elevation, which is that on the right in Figure 9. The main view is East, towards the river. In theory, it is possible to see the courts, but there are trees and bushes in the way.

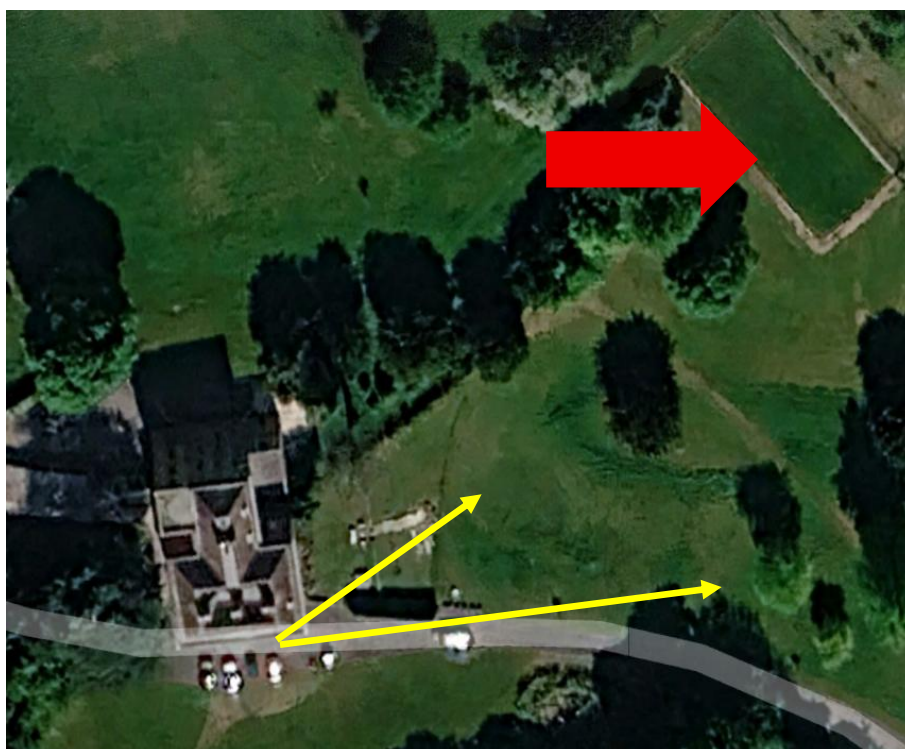


Figure 11 - Aerial photograph showing house in relation to tennis court

In addition, one has to take account of the difference in height. There is a fall of some 8m from the house to the court, and there is a terrace round the house, so that there is a physical difficulty in gaining a good view of the court from ground floor windows.

Figure 12 provides an indication of the degree of fall from the house to the court. The view is from the drive leading South from the house, and not from the house itself. The stepped hedging and the iron “Estate Fencing”, in particular, help the observer recognise the difference in height. The tower of All Saints Church can be seen at the top left.



Figure 12 - Tennis court, viewed from the access drive, and looking North East

In its advice on the setting of heritage assets, Heritage England advises one should “*Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm*”. It sets out means by which either could be achieved but some, such as the removal of features to allow better views, are impractical. Indeed, we agree with the landscape guidance for the area should focus on conservation and not enhancement. Our firm believe is that there would be minimal, if any, harm, to the setting because:

- There will not be a new feature added to the landscape;
- The views of the court are limited, as it the inter-visibility between the court and the house;
- The new fence/gate will be in black. Clearly, black is a recessive colour, readily absorbed in views, and it will replace an unkempt, rusty fence. There would thus be an enhancement in appearance;
- While the two-tone green court surface will not look natural, it would not be strident in colour and would not be readily apparent from outside the court itself;
- There would not be any external lighting that could disturb the area’s character at night, not impact upon the appreciation of “dark skies”.

All Saints Church, Netheravon

The parish church is a very significant listed building, being Grade I and listed early, in 1964. The listed citation states:

NETHERAVON - SU 14 SW 9/98 Church of All Saints 27.5.64 I Anglican parish and prebendal church. C11, C12, C13 and C15. Rendered flint with tiled roofs, lead to aisles. Nave with aisles, chancel with



north vestry, and west tower. Entrance through west tower. A most impressive tall arch with roll moulded arrises on paired half-round imposts with carved capitals. Low side doors with monolithic lintels and blind tympana. This work all probably early C11, the lateral doors leading to former porticus, the scars of the walls of which are clearly seen. The west door was probably under a porch or small west forebuilding. Nave C13, with corbel table and lancet clerestory. Aisles have C15 three-light windows, the west walls being the east walls of the demolished porticus, with herringbone masonry. Chancel also C13, with simple side lancets and 3-light Geometric east window. Tower has side-alternate quoins and herringbone large flints, of 3 stages, the upper stage offset, and having C11-C12 lights and a billet corbel table. Two inset western buttresses disguise evidence of forebuilding. 1626 parapet, the pinnacles removed. Interior: West tower has high arch to nave, the imposts with 3 attached shafts leading through basic capitals to arris and intrados rolls. Nave arcade C13, of 4 bays, round columns, the eastern with four clustered shafts and trumpet capitals. Clerestory has wide embrasures. Walls plastered in C19. Also C19 steep pitched open roof with crown posts and arch braced collars. High door to former rood screen. Chancel arch C19 Romanesque, and C19 open timber roof to chancel, which also has trefoiled piscina, and aumbrey. South aisle extended east in C19, with C19 opening to chancel and external door, both well carved. North porch demolished after 1809. Fittings: Font, C19, octagonal. Pulpit: c1919 highly carved with nodding ogees. Monuments: Two wall monuments in chancel. North side: Marble tablet with shaped slate field over, with draped marble urn on casket. To Thomas Herne of Bloomsbury, died 1799. Panel added for niece, died 1909. South side: Similar tablet by T. King of Bath. Marble panel with pilasters. Draped urn on casket against grey slate field, to Daniel Herne, died 1814. Simple brass on south wall, to John Samwell, died 1669, and two late C19 brasses. C19 glass in east and west aisle windows. Netheravon was probably a location of a pre-conquest religious house. (Pevsner: *Buildings of England, Wiltshire*; Taylor & Taylor, Anglo-Saxon Architecture, 1965, 456-8.)

Listing NGR: SU1478848395

The Church was probably founded in Saxon times, but it had become downgraded at the time of the Domesday book and buildings around the site removed. The church was significantly rebuilt in Norman times. More buildings were removed from around in church in the eighteenth century to facilitate the creation of the landscaped grounds of Netheravon House. Today, no descriptions of the church focus on its setting, but almost entirely on the building, which can be readily appreciated from the recreation area to the North, and from the unmetalled road, which is probably Roman in origin, leading to it from the village.

Again, consideration of the significance of the impact of the development on the setting of this heritage asset has to bear in mind that there is already a court in existence. Even though the court, at its nearest point, is only about 50m from the church door, and the two features are at a similar level, on a terrace above the river, there is limited visual interconnection between the two. The tennis court is behind the gap between the trees in the image in Figure 13. Even with few leaves on the trees⁵, the court is not apparent.

⁵ The photograph was taken on 1st April 2026



Figure 13 -View from churchyard towards tennis court

Figure 14 shows a view from the tennis court before the old fencing was removed.



Figure 14 - View of church from tennis court prior to removal of old fence



One can imagine, from this image, that the setting of the church from this direction, appreciated only by a few people, would not be jeopardised by the improved fencing and the better quality surface. It would be counter-productive to plant trees or a hedge between the church and the court.

In summary, especially considering the minor changes to an existing feature, we consider that the impact of the proposals on the setting of both important heritage assets would be negligible. Such is the limited nature of the impact, we do not consider any harm would ensue, let alone “less than substantial” harm.

10. Ecological Assessment

There has not been an ecological assessment of the site, which was, until recently, a lawn that was managed to encourage a grass sward only. It was thus of very limited ecological value. In any event, this proposal is for a householder development, which is exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain.

There will be no external lighting at the site. Therefore, there will be no injurious impacts on nocturnal wildlife.

Consequently, the impact on ecology is considered to be negligible.

11. Alignment with Planning Policies

As this application is a full planning application, notwithstanding its very limited nature, this statement includes a comprehensive review of planning policy at both national and local level. However, given that the principle of the development is established, the focus is only on design issues: impact on landscape and on heritage assets.

11.1 National Policy

In December 2024, the Government published its revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which sets out the Government’s policies for England and how it expects them to be applied⁶. This section of the statement sets out elements of the NPPF pertinent to this application, and considers whether the proposals are consistent with the document and its principles.

The NPPF sets out the overall aim of the planning system, which is to help deliver sustainable development through the plan-led system. The Framework defines three dimensions to sustainable development; these being economic, social and environmental. In supporting these three areas of sustainable development, the Framework highlights the planning system’s objectives:

- a) an economic objective – *not a relevant factor here*
- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; In this case, the revitalisation of a good

⁶ The 2024 version thus represents the views of the present Government at that time. A revised NPPF has been circulated for comment, but is not likely to be enacted during the determination of this application.



quality recreation facility enhances the physical and mental health of the applicants and their guests, potentially reducing their dependence on health and welfare facilities

- c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy. The development can, as we have set out in this statement, take place without any damage to the environment.

The Framework robustly emphasises the presumption in favour of sustainable development and that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan (unless material considerations indicate otherwise). Where applications conflict with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, they should be refused. This section examines the development plan and shows that the development accords with policy. It should also be noted that paragraph 11 makes the clear statement:

- *“(local planning authorities should be approving) development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
- *where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date 8, granting permission unless:*
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear 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..”*

Paragraph 89 then goes on to clarify that developments should be sensitive to local circumstances, as is the case here. In addition, it states: *“The use of previously developed land..... should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist”*. The proposals meet this guidance by reusing the footprint of the present court.

Achieving well-designed places

The revised NPPF has a specific section (12) on good design – more attention is paid to this aim than in previous policy. Paragraph 135 includes the following (inter alia):

“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*



c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;”

Many of the above criteria are irrelevant in this case, as the overall form of the site will remain largely unaltered. The sense of place will remain, and the good quality surface will ensure that little maintenance will be needed to retain the facility.

In terms of heritage, paragraph 207 of the NPPF states:

“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted.”

In this case, the details of heritage assets were investigated, and the impact of the proposal on those assets considered with care in Section 9. The impact on the assets is considered to be negligible.

Summary of review of the NPPF

The proposals would accord with policy at the national level across the relevant range of topics.

11.2 Local Policy

The Wiltshire Core Strategy remains the key local planning policy. The relevant policy on design is Core Policy 57: Ensuring high quality design and place shaping. Not all of its criteria are relevant here, so the following are considered. Proposals for development should show that a positive contribution can be made by:

i. enhancing local distinctiveness by responding to the value of the natural and historic environment, relating positively to its landscape setting and the existing pattern of development and responding to local topography by ensuring that important views into, within and out of the site are to be retained and enhanced. We have shown that the change proposed would be minor and that the vegetation and topography play an important role in ensuring the proposal is integrated

ii. the retention and enhancement of existing important landscaping and natural features, (e.g. trees, hedges, banks and watercourses), in order to take opportunities to enhance biodiversity, create wildlife and recreational corridors, effectively integrate the development into its setting and to justify and mitigate against any losses that may occur through the development No such features will be impacted.

iv. being sympathetic to and conserving historic buildings and historic landscapes Fully addressed. See Section 9.



vi. making efficient use of land whilst taking account of the characteristics of the site and the local context to deliver an appropriate development which relates effectively to the immediate setting and to the wider character of the area. The existing site will be used and a very limited extension made, for practical purposes.

xii. the use of high standards of building materials, finishes and landscaping,..... The contractors have a well-founded reputation for utilising high-quality materials.

The relevant policy for managing impacts on heritage assets is Core Policy 58: Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment. It states (*inter alia*):

Development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment.

Designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance, including:

- i. nationally significant archaeological remains*
- ii. World Heritage Sites within and adjacent to Wiltshire*
- iii. buildings and structures of special architectural or historic interest*
- iv. the special character or appearance of conservation areas*
- v. historic parks and gardens*
- vi. important landscapes, including registered battlefields and townscapes.*

Distinctive elements of Wiltshire's historic environment, including non-designated heritage assets, which contribute to a sense of local character and identity will be conserved, and where possible enhanced. The potential contribution of these heritage assets towards wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits will also be utilised where this can be delivered in a sensitive and appropriate manner in accordance with Core Policy 57 (Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping).

Although there are important archaeological remains, including a Roman villa, in the wider grounds of Netheravon House, the development is not near them. Moreover, the works, although intrusive by creating a new porous base, will be on land that has been raised and modified previously. There is therefore no reason to consider that archaeological remains will be impacted. The examination of the impact on the setting of the important listed structures has been undertaken in Section 9, and it was concluded that no harm would ensue.

Wiltshire has adopted a Supplementary Planning Document on Design. However, it provides no relevant guidance on the design of recreation facilities such as this, and thus alignment with Core Policy 57 remains the principal factor on the acceptability on design grounds.

Therefore, we conclude that the proposals would accord with local policy.



12. Conclusion

This proposal is of a minor nature, replacing aspects of an existing householder facility. The land use is therefore established. It is only its juxtaposition to a Grade I listed church, and set within the grounds of a Grade II* listed house, that makes the works of interest. Both the applicants and we are conscious of our responsibilities to safeguard and conserve those heritage assets, and their presence has guided the redesign of the existing site.

We have fully considered whether the replacement fence and new playing surface would impact upon the setting of the two important heritage assets. We conclude that no harm would ensue. Moreover, the use of recessive coloured materials would ease the integration of the works into the landscape. In addition, the construction procedure will safeguard the turf of the grounds of the house, and all spoil not used in the works will be distributed within the grounds.

Accordingly, the proposals align with planning policy at both local and national level, and they seek to follow the principles of sustainable development. Thus, we contend that planning permission should be granted without delay and subject only to necessary and relevant conditions that meet the “tests of reasonableness”.