

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

11 May 2026

Jocelyn Sage
Senior Conservation Officer
Wiltshire Council Conservation
(South/West)

Officer's Name:Andrew Thomas
Officer's Title: Planning Officer

Application No: PL/2026/020708
Ausonia, 65 West Street, Warminster
New additional dwelling

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

Summary

Because I haven't been able to visit, and in view of the absence of an assessment of the impact on the proposed character of this part of the CA, I do not wish to object but I do have significant concerns in respect of the scale, design and proposed materials.

Scope of comments: the following comments relate to the built historic environment.

Policy:

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 also requires the Council to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of designated Conservation Areas.

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 214-16 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." It is also required that 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.

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.

The following points are taken from the Historic England document "The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 3" (HE GPA3) that are considered to be particularly relevant:

HE GPA3 Part 1:

"The NPPF makes it clear that the setting of a heritage asset is the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset."

"The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. ...views of or from an asset will play an important part..."

"While setting can be mapped in the context of an individual application or proposal, it cannot be definitively and permanently described for all time as a spatially bounded area or as lying within a set distance of a heritage asset. This is because the surroundings of a heritage asset will change over time."

"The importance lies in what the setting contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or to the ability to appreciate that significance."

Site and assets considered:

The proposed site is part of the plot/garden to the rear of Ausonia, a detached modern house which is accessed off West Street. The site is within the Warminster conservation area.



Ausonia is a 'T-shaped' building with the main element being the element orientated north-south in the plot, with the 'arm' having dormer windows. To its rear is a garden lined with trees along its eastern boundary. I understand that Ausonia is a converted garage (there is a 2008 application).

The 'arm' of Ausonia can be glimpsed from West Street.

**Proposal:**

The proposal is for a new 4-bedroom one and a half storey house with wall dormers (it looks to be a 'tall' 1 ½ storey – I have not scaled). It would have a brick plinth with timber cladding making up most of the elevation and a pitched roof in tile (type unspecified). To the rear would be a two storey projection. Other elements would be PVCu.

There are no site sections to assess the height of the proposed dwelling in relation to neighbouring properties.

There is no mention of the trees on the eastern boundary. I note that the Phase 1 Habitat Survey doesn't refer to them so I assume they are outside the site boundary?



Relevant planning history:

Issues: impact on the conservation area.

Information considered/provided:

Paragraph 207 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, there is no assessment fails to meet the requirements of the NPPF.

Significance of assets and contribution of setting

The adopted Warminster conservation area appraisal identifies this sub-area as 'residential area 2'.

'Pound Street and West Street are predominantly residential in use and area somewhat removed from the town centre. These were principal routes into the town, and linear development.....'

It also says

'Within the conservation area, densities are reasonably consistent and there are few detached and semi-detached dwellings. Beyond the conservation area, the building layouts and character is much more suburban'.

Under the 'materials heading'

- Mixture of rubble stone and brick, some finished in render and/or paint
- Clay tiles including pantiles, some slate
- Timber sash windows with glazing bars and timber casement windows
- Occasional boundary walls, some with railings

To also note, that single-storey former outbuildings such as stables and brew houses etc survive in Warminster in reasonable numbers and make a strong positive contribution to the character of the CA.

Assessment & conclusion:

The NPPF confirms that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a **designated heritage asset** (ie a conservation area) 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 application contains little information. There are no site sections and there is no detailed landscaping plan. As such I have reservations about this 'backland' development scheme. I consider the proposals are ambitious in their scale and massing. The design is uncharacteristic of the traditional buildings of Warminster and the materials of insufficient quality for the CA. My concern is that the development is too suburban in character and as such, erodes the qualities of this part of the CA.

I also would flag up the issue of trees on the plot (or adjacent). Trees in CAs should be carefully assessed for the contribution they make to the townscape.

As it stands, I am unable to support the proposals which I consider would fail to 'preserve or enhance' the character of the conservation area.