

## Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

### URBAN DESIGN

**Officer name:**

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**Date:** 19.05.2026

**Application No:** PL/2026/02443

**Proposal:** *Erection of 47 dwellings with associated access, internal roads, parking, public open space, landscaping, drainage and associated infrastructure.*

**Site Address:** *Land at White Street, West Lavington, Wiltshire SN10 4HR*

**Case Officer:** *Helena Carney*

Reference:

Application files indexed on the Arcus application webpage (15.05.26)

Policy and guidance:

- Wiltshire Core Strategy, Core Policy 57 'Ensuring high quality design and place shaping' (Abbreviated CP57)
- Wiltshire Design Guide – Wiltshire Council Supplementary Planning Document adopted 25th March 2024 (abbreviated WDG)
- Any relevant 'Made' and not expired Neighbourhood Plan document. including often this as an Annexe /separate Neighbourhood Plan Design guidance document
- National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG December 2024) (abbreviated NPPF)
- National Design Guide (MHCLG January 2021) (abbreviated NDG)
- Building for a Healthy Life (Homes England June 2020) (referenced in the NPPF) (abbreviated BfHL)
- Streets for a Healthy Life: A companion guide to Building for a Healthy Life (Homes England) (abbreviated SFHL)

*Note: Proposed update to NPPF expected March 2026 and incorporation of NDG, NMDC Parts 1 & 2, and BfHL/SfHL in a 'Design and Place making Planning Practice Guidance' document (DPPPG) expected shortly also.*

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 NPPF recognises the role of design review in ensuring high standards of design and we encourage major development proposals to be independently assessed at an early stage in the process. The NPPF indicates "significant weight" is to be given to designs "which help raise the standard of design more generally in an area". The draft NPPF intends to increase this to "substantial weight". Where a project has a design review, we will consider the panel's recommendations in our planning process and decisions. The Council's Urban Design Team can provide further information on this process on request.

## Observations

The site has previously been the subject of a Pre-Application (ENQ/2025/00848). Although Urban Design did not comment previously, the changes to the design have been noted following comments from consultees.

## Objection

### Layout and Urban Design

The overall townscape approach is welcomed, particularly the use of perimeter blocks. There are however two particular areas of the scheme where the layout is less successful which should be amended.

- 1) The south western edge, which fronts onto the pedestrian path, is weakened by the use of a flat over garage arrangement (FOG) serving Plots 07 and 08. This typology presents a poor relationship to the pedestrian route and results in an inactive frontage that does not positively address this edge. The arrangement creates a situation where the building effectively turns its back on the perimeter block edge harming the quality of the pedestrian environment and reduces natural surveillance.

This approach conflicts with CP57, which requires development to respond positively to its context and deliver a strong sense of place. It is also at odds with BfHL principles relating to well defined streets and active frontages, where buildings are expected to face and positively address public routes and currently the blank façade created aligns with 'what red looks like' on p55 of BfHL. The WDG supports the need for strong edges and avoidance of inactive or poorly defined frontages.

The use of this typology is discouraged as it introduces front and back ambiguities and undermines the clarity of the block structure. This edge should be redesigned to avoid the issues created by the FOG arrangement and the building should have an outward facing relationship with the pedestrian path.

- 2) The parking courts to the northern part of the site are not sufficiently overlooked by surrounding properties. This results in areas of the scheme that lack passive surveillance and creates poorly defined corners. Due to the positioning on the site, which is on the edge boundary condition, these spaces have the potential to feel unsafe and do not form successful parts of the residential environment.

This conflicts with CP57 requirements relating to safety and natural surveillance. BfHL also expects parking areas to be well integrated and overlooked, with current proposal aligning more closely with 'what red looks like' on p73 of BfHL. The layout in this area should be revised to ensure that parking spaces are directly overlooked by dwellings or reconfigured entirely to form part of the primary street structure.

A revised approach could involve increasing the size of the adjacent perimeter block to include more homes and dwellings along the northern edge which address this condition in a similar way to the eastern boundary. Parking could then be accommodated within garages or car ports associated with these homes. Similarly rearranging the parking courts and adjacent housing to better overlook the courts could be an acceptable solution. If the relationship to the boundaries is a concern then typologies which do not create overlooking issues should be explored such as mews housing.

- 3) The perimeter block structure is welcomed; however the boundary treatment to these blocks is currently weak in places. The reliance on fencing does not provide sufficient enclosure or a robust enough boundary.

WDG emphasises the importance of robust and clearly defined boundary treatments, while BfHL highlights the need for strong defensible edges between public and private space. The current approach does not meet these expectations. Boundary treatments should be revised to incorporate more solid materials such as brick walls to strengthen enclosure and reinforce the perimeter block structure.

Please see extract from WDG of a robust boundary wall condition.



Side gables include large windows to habitable rooms. Boundary walls include perforated brickwork. The Tannery, Holt.

## Landscape

- 4) The increase in street tree provision following pre application discussions is welcomed although it would be preferable for a greater proportion of trees to be located within the public realm rather than within private gardens. This would allow the trees to contribute more effectively to the street scene and help define the public realm. This approach aligns with WDG expectations and BfHL principles relating to green infrastructure and the quality of streets and spaces.

A greater number of trees should be explored around the loop road also to enhance the character of these streets. It is worth noting that trees also play a beneficial role in climate resilience offering shading to nearby houses and public realm.

- 5) The move away from underground attenuation tanks is also welcomed. This represents a positive shift towards more visible and multifunctional drainage solutions.

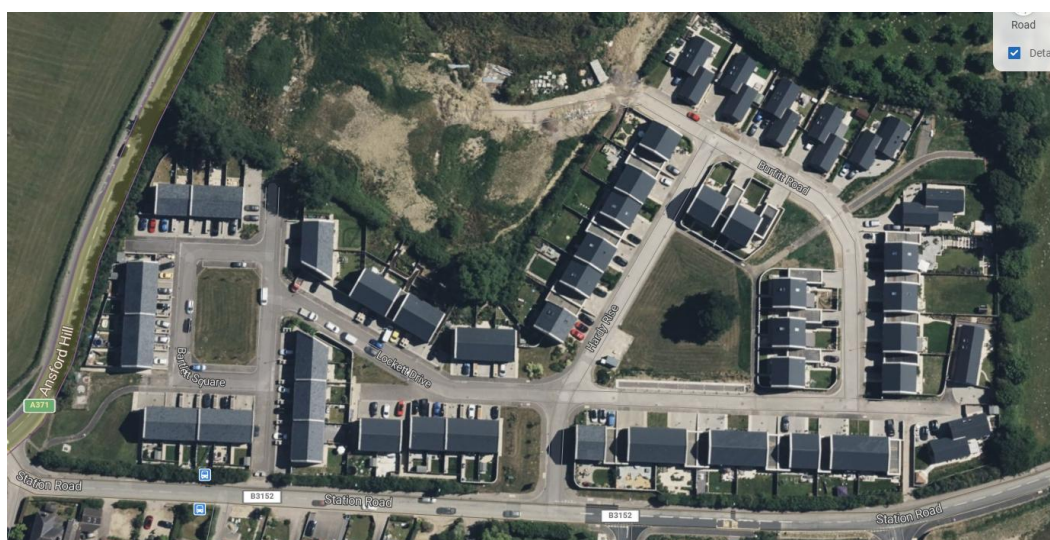
There still remains an opportunity to further integrate sustainable drainage features within the streets themselves. Both BfHL and the WDG (Sections 6.3 and 6.5) expect sustainable drainage to be integrated into streets and open spaces as multifunctional green and blue infrastructure using a combination of wetlands, rain gardens, small ponds, and permeable surfaces, rather than appearing as isolated or engineered features. At present, the SUDs could make a more meaningful contribution to the street character.

## Architectural Design

- 6) There are several concerns relating to internal standards. Floor to ceiling heights appear limited in several plots. These do not appear to meet typical expectations of 2.3m noted in the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) and should be reviewed. Several plots including plots 2 and 3 also appear to fall below NDSS in terms of floor area. If it is indeed a 'high quality' scheme being designed as referenced in the DAS, then this should be amended as low ceilings would constitute a low quality development.
- 7) Plot S31 does not appear to show sufficient 300mm nibs to doors associated with Part M4(2). This is evident on the upper floor bathroom. S32 kitchen dining is a tight compromised layout. Insufficient space is shown for the 1500mm turning circle which is likely to be compromised if the worktops require service routes behind them. It is recommended that this kitchen is increased in size or ground floor layout adjusted.

Plot S42 also shows compromised door nibs in relation to Part M4(2). Please revise these layouts to suit the requirements of M4(2).

- 8) Worth noting the Affordable Housing Enabling Team's response regarding the mix of social rented housing and the need for bungalows rather than maisonettes/ flats. From an urban design perspective, plots 34-37 undermine the notion of tenure blind housing. The Wiltshire Design Guide promotes tenure neutral development, requiring that affordable and market housing are indistinguishable in appearance and fully integrated across the site. This aligns with Building for a Healthy Life principles, which identify tenure segregation as a negative design outcome. Currently this building is not of equal high standard to the rest of the development and stands out as an apartment building. In addition the large format date numbers are inappropriately out of character with the architectural language of the development as a whole. It is recommended that the housing enabling team's comments are taken on board and bungalow typologies could be successfully introduced at the northern boundary in line with comments made in point 2). Please see below an example from Castle Cary which makes use of bungalows at one edge of the development (top right of the image).



- 9) Several elevations are not turning the corner sufficiently and consequently are having a negative effect on the urban design of the scheme. Plot 9 as an example presents an unsatisfactory elevation to the pedestrian route and fails to adequately address the corner. The elevation lacks sufficient articulation and does not contribute positively to the street scene. This is inconsistent with CP57 which requires buildings to respond appropriately to their spatial context. BfHL guidance also highlights the importance of clear and legible corner conditions. Currently the proposals align more closely with 'what red looks like' on page 55 of Building for a Healthy Life, where blank elevations and poorly resolved corner buildings are identified as poor design outcomes, contrary to the expectation for active, dual-aspect frontages set out on pages 52–53. Although an effort has been made on plot 09 to include windows, the elevation still has large areas of blank façade which are not addressing the pedestrian walkway.



The design should be amended to introduce greater architectural articulation to homes turning the corner. This could be achieved through features such as a bay or oriel window or additional detailing that emphasises the corner. The window hierarchy and proportions should also be reviewed. Please see example below of a scheme in Cambridge in which a house successfully addresses a corner. Here articulation in brick patterns has been used to create a coherent design balancing small and larger windows.



- 10) A schedule of materials should be provided and supported by physical samples, preferably displayed within an on-site sample panel, to enable a full and accurate assessment of the proposed materials prior to determination.
- 11) Additional key details should also be provided to enable a full and accurate assessment of the proposed design and construction quality.

## Conclusion

The scheme demonstrates a positive understanding of urban design and townscape principles, particularly through the use of perimeter blocks and an improved landscape strategy. However, a number of important issues remain. These include the use of flat over garage typologies which weaken key edges, poorly overlooked parking courts, and lack of public realm street trees. It is also worth noting the scheme would benefit from stronger corner articulation, more robust solid boundary treatments to perimeter blocks and improvements on internal standards.

As currently proposed, the development does not fully meet the high standard of design and place shaping required by Core Policy 57. Revisions to the layout, built form and detailed design are required to ensure compliance with CP57, the Wiltshire Design Guide and Building for a Healthy Life.