

Application No:	ENQ/2025/00810
Application Type	Pre-Application enquiry
Proposal:	New warehouse building for manufacturing, with associated external works
Location:	BLUEMAY LTD., BIDMEAD PARK, SELLS GREEN, SEEND, MELKSHAM, SN12 6RS
Case Officer:	Audrey Lo

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for your pre-application enquiry received on 02/06/2025.

Please note that the advice below represents an officer's informal professional opinion based on the information provided at the time of writing. It is given without prejudice to any formal decision the Council may make on a subsequent planning application.

Any future application would be subject to full assessment, including site publicity and consultation, and other material considerations may emerge through that process. This advice is based on current adopted planning policies and guidance available at the time of writing.

Summary of Officer View

☒ **Potentially acceptable, subject to resolution of key issues.** This response identifies what needs addressing before the proposal could be supported.

Constraints:

The site is subject to the following relevant planning designations and constraints:

- Risk of Flooding from Surface Water 1 in 30 year extent (3.3% AEP)
- Risk of Flooding from Surface Water 1 in 100 year extent (1% AEP)
- Risk of Flooding from Surface Water 1 in 1000 year extent (0.1% AEP)
- Areas Susceptible to Ground Water Flooding
- Agricultural Land Classification Grade 3

Relevant Planning History:

Proposal / Summary
K/32033 - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 8/12/1995 – New warehouse and production unit.
K/74/0471 - Full planning permission Decision - Approved Date: 18/7/1974 – Toilet and canteen extension
PL/2023/04310 - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 7/8/2023 – Insertion of new mezzanine within existing building with associated new door and windows, new entrance canopy, bridge link, and roof mounted solar panels. Engineering operations to construct steps. Installation of handrail.
K/43285 - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 18/6/2002 – Erection of workshop.

K/44001 - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 19/12/2002 – Change of use to furniture removal and storage and vehicle sales and repairs premises, extension to building, and stationing of portacabin
K/44170 - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 23/12/2002 – Erection of workshop (revised plans to those approved under K/043285, showing larger workshop)
K/78/0032 - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 16/3/1978 – Tip for builders' rubble and top soil and restoration of land to agricultural use
K/79/0180 - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 10/5/1979 – Extension to workshop
K/80/0343 - Outline Planning Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 29/1/1981 – Light industrial units
K/81/0459 - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 28/5/1981 – Storage area for agricultural machinery manufactured on site
K/82/0840 - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 25/11/1982 – Industrial building
K/85/0118 - Reserved Matters – New industrial premises

Relevant Planning Policies:

The development plan for Wiltshire comprises the *Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)* (adopted January 2015) and any made neighbourhood plans, which remains the principal statutory planning document guiding development across the county. In line with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Though the development plan is considered as a whole, those parts deemed to be particularly relevant to this pre-application enquiry are listed below:

The adopted *Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)*, with particular regard to:

- Core Policy 1 Settlement Strategy;
- Core Policy 2 Delivery Strategy;
- Core Policy 3 Infrastructure Requirements;
- Core Policy 15 Melksham Spatial Strategy
- Core Policy 34 Additional Employment Land
- Core Policy 35 Existing Employment Land
- Core Policy 41 Sustainable Construction and Low-Carbon Energy;
- Core Policy 48 Supporting Rural Life
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Core Policy 51 Landscape
- Core Policy 55 Air Quality;
- Core Policy 56 Contaminated Land;
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 60 Sustainable Transport;
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development;
- Core Policy 62 Development Impacts on the Transport Network;
- Core Policy 64 Demand Management
- Core Policy 67 Flood Risk;

Made Neighbourhood Plans:

Seend Neighbourhood Plan 2020 – 2030

- Policy SP1 Locally Distinctive, High Quality Design

- Policy SP4 Landscape and Local Key Views
- Policy SP7 Kennet & Avon Canal

Supplementary Planning Document:

Local Transport Plan 2011-2026

Local Transport Plan 2025 -2038

Emerging Policy – Wiltshire Local Plan Review:

The Council's draft Local Plan (Regulation 19 stage, 2023) is a material consideration but carries limited weight at this stage.

- Policy 64 Additional employment land

Assessment

Principle of Development

Wiltshire Core Strategy Policies CP1 (Settlement Strategy) and CP2 (Delivery Strategy) set out the spatial strategy for sustainable development across Wiltshire. These policies direct new development to the most sustainable locations, primarily within the limits of development of market towns, local service centres, and large villages. Proposals outside these limits are generally only supported in exceptional circumstances.

Policy SP11 of the Seend Neighbourhood Plan sets out that proposals for improved local employment opportunities will be supported provided it meets Core Policy 2 of the WCS.

The application site is situated outside of defined settlement boundary and in the countryside; however, the proposal relates to an existing commercial land within an established industrialised or commercialised area.

Core Policy 34 (CP34) supports additional employment land subject to it being an established business and adjacent to either Principal Settlements, Market Towns and Local Service Centres. In addition, the proposal is required to comply with the secondary requirements under Core Policy 34 in order to be acceptable in principle, these are as follows:

- Meet sustainable development objectives as set out in the policies of this Core Strategy;
- Are consistent in scale with their location, do not adversely affect nearby buildings and the surrounding area or detract from residential amenity;
- Are supported by evidence that they are required to benefit the local economic and social needs;
- Would not undermine the delivery of strategic employment allocations; and
- Are supported by adequate infrastructure.

In this instance, it is noted that the application site has long been occupied by a business operating under Bluemay Ltd for production operations within the two existing buildings on-site. Furthermore, the site is located approximately 2.1 miles from the nearest market town and benefits from immediate access to Bath Road (A365), which provides a direct route to the town. The site is also approximately 1 mile to the northeast of the large village of Seend, with various Public Rights of Way (PRoW) footpath connections to enable sustainable transport options. As such the proposal is considered to comply with criteria (a) of CP34.

While a rough block plan, and aerial sketch views have been submitted to indicate the estimated footprint (930 square metres) and scale of the proposed warehouse, no elevation or floor plans have

been provided. The submitted Pre-Planning Application Statement refers to the approved warehouse and production unit within planning permission under reference K/32033 and suggests that the approved scheme is partially completed, and that this proposal would seek to erect a comparatively more modest addition to the two existing buildings. The amenity elements are discussed further below in this Pre-Application Response. In the absence of detailed plans, the Local Planning Authority is unable to provide a detailed assessment on the proposal's impact on the character and appearance of the site and any neighbouring amenities.

The proposal has indicated through the submitted details that these existing buildings are no longer suitable for modern manufacturing needs and due to the presence of asbestos, any significant alterations to these existing buildings are not viable. It also states that the number of staff, number of deliveries to and from the site and the production capacity for the site, is proposed to remain unchanged. No evidence has been provided to demonstrate the need. It is possible that the proposal would provide a benefit to the local economy by the improving upon the existing site, the retention of the business and retaining its employees in the local area. However, no evidence has been provided to demonstrate the need as required by criterion (c) of CP34.

It is noted that the submitted Pre-Planning Application Statement has stated the proposed warehouse would effectively support production activities and optimise adaptability for future internal storage and operational layouts across the new and existing buildings. Given this justification and based on the submitted details, it is not considered that the proposed warehouse would undermine the delivery of strategic employment allocations. As such, the proposal would be considered to meet criterion (d) of CP34.

With the application site's proximity to Bath Road, and that the proposal does not involve changes in the number of employees / production capacities, or alterations to the existing access, it is considered that there is adequate infrastructure to support the commercial use of the site. As such, the proposal is considered to meet criterion (e) of CP34.

The principle of development is established and there would be no change in land use. Only the erection of a new warehouse as an extension to the existing buildings are proposed. However, in the absence of sufficient details and evidence, the proposal as it stands is unable to meet all of the requirements set out under CP34. Should the proposal be submitted to the LPA via a formal full planning application, it should be supported by detailed elevations, floor plans and evidence to justify the need for the proposed warehouse.

Design and Impact on Character and Appearance of the Area

Policy CP57 of the WCS seeks to ensure that all development proposals are of a high standard of design that responds positively to the local context and contributes to a sense of place. This includes consideration of layout, form, materials, scale, and relationship to the surroundings. Proposals should reinforce local distinctiveness, protect the character of settlements, and promote inclusive and attractive environments. Policy SP1 of the Seend Neighbourhood Plan reinforces the above requirement and Policy SP4 seeks to protect the character and local distinctiveness of the Parish landscape. Policy SP7 seeks to protect the setting of the Kennet & Avon Canal.

Whilst the proposed location of the proposed warehouse is in close proximity to the Kennet & Avon Canal (approximately 90 metres), the site (approximately 30 metres away) is entirely obscured by intervening buildings and vegetation. It is therefore considered that the proposal is capable of being designed to be sympathetic to the protected setting of the Kennet and Avon Canal.

The Council's Landscape Team has been consulted and notes that the site sits within the Avon Open Clay Vale (12A) identified as part of the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment. In the absence of elevations and detailed plans of the proposed building/site, the Landscape Officer advises that the

proposed building should not sit higher in the landscape than the existing buildings, and that the proposed materials must be sympathetic to the surrounding landscape, taking into consideration of any cumulative impacts caused by the existing light cladding of the existing building. The full Landscape response has been issued to the applicant.

In the absence of elevations and details of proposed external materials, the LPA is unable to provide a detailed assessment on the proposal's impacts on the local character and appearance. Nevertheless, the indicated scale, mass and form appears to be in keeping with the adjacent buildings on-site and in the surrounding areas.

Should the proposal come forward within a formal planning application, elevation plans, detailed floor plans, site sections showing the roof line levels Above Ordnance Datum comparing existing buildings and proposed, contours and levels drawings and a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan in line with BS 8545.

Residential Amenity

Policy CP57 also includes a requirement that development should ensure a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupants (point vii). This includes safeguarding privacy, outlook, natural light, and protection from noise, disturbance, and overbearing effects.

The nearest residential dwelling is approximately 75 metres to the east from the proposed location. One of the existing buildings on-site sits between the proposed location of the proposed warehouse and this dwelling. No details to clarify the nature of the production activities/operations have been submitted, it is therefore unclear to how the existing operations are intended to be carried out and subsequently the extent of its impacts on the neighbouring amenity. However, given the distance and intervening buildings, it is considered that the proposal is capable of being designed to be respectful of the neighbouring amenities.

Highway Safety and Parking

Policies CP60 to CP64 set the transport and accessibility framework for development in Wiltshire. Proposals must provide safe and suitable access for all users and should not have a severe impact on the transport network. Adequate parking, turning space, cycle storage, and accessibility for waste collection should be incorporated in line with Wiltshire's adopted car parking strategy. Policy SP14 of the Seend Neighbourhood Plan expects development proposals, where appropriate, to be supported by a Transport Statement or Assessment setting out the transport issues, including the measures that will be taken to mitigate any road safety or any significant traffic impact of the scheme and offer opportunities to improve the pedestrian and cycle connectivity.

The Highway Authority has been consulted and has noted no objections on the basis that the number of staff, number of deliveries to and from the site and the production capacity for the site, is proposed to remain unchanged.

Ecology and Biodiversity

Policy CP50 seeks to conserve and enhance biodiversity across Wiltshire. Development should avoid harm to protected species and habitats, and provide net gains in biodiversity wherever possible. The Council has a statutory duty under the Environment Act 2021 to secure 10% measurable biodiversity net gain (BNG).

The Council's Ecology Team has been consulted and has noted that the site's proximity to a Country Wildlife Site (Kennet & Avon Canal), potential for bat activity on-site, potential for destruction and disturbance of Great Crested Newts and their habitat with the presence of the pond on-site and existing

records for protected species within the local area. Relevant surveys and assessment of impacts with proposals for mitigation and enhancements are therefore required as part of any formal planning application. The detailed ecology response has been issued to the applicant.

Given the siting and proposed footprint of the proposed warehouse, it is considered that the proposal would be subject to the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements in a formal planning application as no evidence has been submitted to demonstrate otherwise. Any formal planning application must therefore be supported by details to demonstrate that no net loss of biodiversity would result from the proposal and a minimum of 10% BNG can be achieved.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Policy CP67 aligns with national policy (NPPF, para 159–169) and requires that development avoids increasing flood risk on-site or elsewhere. Development within Flood Zones 2 or 3 should be subject to the sequential and (if necessary) exception tests. Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) should be incorporated for all major developments.

The site is in Flood Zone 1. There is a risk of surface water flooding at the site noted at the start of this Pre-Application Response.

The Council's Drainage Engineers have been consulted and have noted the surface water flooding and the site to be underlain by slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils, where drainage could be impeded. It is advised that any formal planning application must demonstrate that overland flow routes are safely managed and that flood risk to people and properties are sufficiently mitigated. A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is required to address all potential sources of flooding and outline a robust drainage strategy.

It has also been advised that the infiltration potential must be confirmed via BRE 365 soakaway testing. Furthermore, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be prioritised, with preference for natural attenuation features such as swales and ponds over tanks. The drainage strategy must comply with national standards and Wiltshire Council's betterment policy, requiring a 20% reduction in post-development runoff rates compared to pre-development levels.

Further requirements include detailed drainage calculations, design drawings, ground investigations, and evidence of third-party discharge consent. The applicant must ensure no increase in flood risk or runoff volume, and provide a comprehensive maintenance and construction management plan.

The Drainage Engineer's full response has been issued to the applicant.

Environmental Considerations (Noise, Air Quality, Contaminated Land, etc.)

Policy CP55 and 56 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that development does not result in unacceptable impacts on human health, amenity or environmental quality, aligning with national guidance in the NPPF. Development should be sited and designed to avoid exposure to, or generation of, significant levels of pollution, including noise, odour, vibration, light, and contamination. Where risks are identified, appropriate assessment and mitigation must be secured.

In the absence of details regarding the exact nature of the existing business' operations/activities, the LPA is unable to provide a detailed assessment regarding the environmental considerations. The Council's Environmental Control and Protection team has provided a response noting the details to be considered by the applicant as part of the submission of a formal planning application; this has been issued to the applicant in full.

Suggested Additional Consultees

Referral to Natural England

Natural England provides its own discretionary pre-application advice service for developments that may impact designated sites such as SSSIs, SACs, SPAs, Ramsar sites, or involve protected species, ancient woodland, priority habitats, or nutrient neutrality implications.

Given the potential for ecological or landscape impacts from your proposal, you are encouraged to seek pre-application input from Natural England, especially if your site lies within or near environmentally sensitive locations.

More information about the service and how to request advice is available via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/developers-get-environmental-advice-on-your-planning-proposals>

You can also contact them directly at:

consultations@naturalengland.org.uk

(For development in Wiltshire and the wider Southwest, this address is appropriate for all planning and casework queries.)

Supporting Information Required for Future Application

When preparing to submit a planning application, it is important to ensure that all the necessary plans, documents, and supporting information are included to meet both national and local validation requirements. Failure to provide the required information may result in delays or your application being declared invalid.

Wiltshire Council has adopted local validation checklists which set out the supporting documents required for different types of development, in addition to those set out by national guidance.

You can access both the National Requirements and Wiltshire Council's Local Validation Checklists here: [Apply for planning permission - Wiltshire Council](#)

We recommend you review the relevant checklist for your proposal type and use it as a guide when preparing your submission.

For your information, should you wish to proceed with a planning application based on the advice provided above, it is recommended that the following documents are submitted in support of your application.

- Design and Access Statement
- Planning Statement
- Ecological Impact Assessment
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (mandatory under the Environment Act 2021)
- Flood Risk Assessment / Drainage Strategy
- Landscape and Ecology Management Plan
- Site Location Plan
- Block Plan/Site Plan
- Existing and Proposed Plans, Elevations, Sections and Roof Plans

If required:

- Contaminated Land / Preliminary Risk Assessment (Phase 1 Desk Study)
- Noise Assessment

- Air Quality Assessment
- Lighting Assessment

Procedural Advice and Consultation Expectations

Applicants should be advised of the Council's procedures for submitting a planning application, including relevant validation requirements and public consultation processes. For major proposals — particularly residential development — it is strongly recommended that applicants engage early with key stakeholders, including:

- The relevant Town or Parish Council
- The local Division Member
- Local residents, where appropriate, via public engagement or community events

Early engagement can help to identify and resolve issues at an early stage, potentially improving outcomes and reducing delays during the formal application process.

Advice regarding Building Regulations

It is likely that your proposal will require separate approval under the Building Regulations. The Surveyor who deals with your area can be contacted on 0300 456 0113. They are happy to provide you with free Building Regulation advice on this proposal and discuss this project further. This will help to ensure that the final decisions are compliant with the Building Regulations and may help save you time and money.

Closing Summary

This advice is offered in good faith based on current policy and guidance. While it provides a helpful steer, it cannot prejudice the outcome of any future planning application. Please ensure that any submission is fully supported by the required information and that material considerations identified above are addressed.

Should you require further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully

Head of Development Management

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