

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Wiltshire Council Conservation (Central)

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Application No: PL/2026/02134
Outline planning permission for up to 315 dwellings with associated access and infrastructure including Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace. All matters are reserved except for access.
Land North and South of Stones Lane, and North of Malmesbury Road, Cricklade

Please find following comments in respect of the above application(s).

Recommendations:

☒	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

Scope of comments: The following comments relate to the conservation of the built historic environment. Other issues, such as those relating to the impact on the wider landscape in general and to below ground archaeological deposits will be subject to consideration by other colleagues within the Council whose specific disciplines relate more closely to these issues.

National Policy and guidance: From the point of view of the historic environment the main statutory tests are set out within the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 66 (PP) requires that **special regard** be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

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.

Local Policy: 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."

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.

Proposal: the proposal is for the construction of up to 315 dwellings with associated infrastructure.

Relevant planning history: PL/2026/00218 - EIA Screening Opinion

Site and Assets considered: the site comprises agricultural land to the west of Cricklade. The site is split with one site covering a single agricultural field to the north of Stones Lane and the remainder, covering three fields, sitting between Stones Lane and Malmesbury Road/Common Hill. It is noted that the site to the north of Stones Lane is included only for use as attenuation with no actual residential development.

There are no designated heritage assets within either section of the site (north or south of Stone's Lane). However, the Grade II listed Hailstone Farm (historically known as Woodward's Farm) lies approximately 250m to the west of the field covered by the northern section of the site and it can be reasonably assumed that this field formed part of the historic landholding of the farm. The area of land to be developed with housing lies about 400m south of this asset. Its relationship with Hailstone Farm is less clear.

The historic route of the Midland and South-Western Junction Railway remains discernible on the north-eastern boundary of the northern site. The latter will be unaffected by the development – its significance largely lies with the remaining legibility and its historic significance as a transport route and new development within its setting will have no impact on the ability to understand its interest – and it is therefore not discussed any further in the following comments.

The site lies alongside a main approach into Cricklade (B4040) from the west and will extend the built form well outside the existing built area. However, the site is separated from the historic core and conservation area by existing modern development and additional impact on the setting of the town centre assets is unlikely.

Issues: potential impact on the listed building to the north of the site.

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, whilst the applications are accompanied by a "Historic Environment Assessment" the document provides limited information about the listed building which is noted as lying to the north of the site (not the west as suggested in the document) and fails to provide any objective assessment of its significance and setting, its relationship with the site or any contribution which this may make to the significance of the asset.

However, paragraph 208 also provides for the local planning authority to make its own assessment of impact and the following heritage recommendations are offered on this basis.

Significance of assets and contribution of setting (as appropriate): The NPPF defines significance as the "value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be **archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic**. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting." Historic England assesses significance in a similar manner, referring to evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values of a place.

In this case the only asset which has potential to be impacted by the proposals is the Grade II listed Hailstone Farm. This farm was historically known as Woodward's Farm and appears only to have changed name in

the mid-later C20. The farmstead is noted on the HER as a “Farmstead with medieval origins” and the current farmhouse is listed as a good example of a C17 farmhouse which the list description notes was “said to be built for the head forester of Braydon Forest”. The HER notes that the farmstead constitutes a C17 farmstead of dispersed plan and buildings dispersed across multiple yards. The house faces to the east towards the historic farmyard of which only a few remnants remain. The tithe map and award for Cricklade are not immediately available to view and details have not been included within the Historic Environment Assessment, neither does this make any comment on the historic ownership of the land or the possibility that the site was historically associated with Hailstone or Woodward’s Farm, although the distance perhaps makes this unlikely.

The significance of the listed farmhouse lies largely with its historic interest, including its fabric, its form, layout and vernacular design and materials and from the contribution it makes to the understanding and experience of the historic agricultural landscape surrounding Cricklade. The land surrounding the farm and its former farmstead has a historic and functional connection with the house that contributes to its significance and its understanding as a farmstead within the rural landscape.

Assessment: The proposed development will be visible within distant views from the farmstead, on the rising ground to the south and will be notable as some of the first modern development to intrude in views within the otherwise rural agrarian landscape. The proposed development would therefore have some limited impact on the significance of the farmstead via the beginnings of the erosion of its wider rural setting. This impact would be greater if evidence indicated that the land was historically and functionally associated with the farmstead. The northern section of the site is much closer to the listed farmhouse but this area is proposed to remain undeveloped and be set aside for ecological mitigation and the impact will be limited, although there will inevitably be some change in its character from its current use for grazing. Overall, it is accepted that the greater part of the proposed site, and particularly that part which includes the more intrusive built elements, would be at some distance from the farmstead and that the majority of its rural surroundings would remain unchanged. Any harm would therefore be at a low level.

Summary & conclusion: current conservation legislation and the policies set out within the NPPF and Core Strategy confirm that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). It is made clear that any harm to a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification.

In this case, the proposals would result in a limited level of harm to the listed Hailstone Farm via the first encroachment of modern development within its wider rural and agricultural setting. The built section of the proposed development would, however, be at some distance from the farmstead and would affect only a small part of its surroundings. Any harm would therefore only be considered as ‘less than substantial harm’ for the purposes of interpreting the NPPF, and at the lowest end of this scale. If the land were shown to lie within the former landholding of the farmstead, then this level might be considered as slightly elevated.

In due course it will fall to the Case Officer to assess the benefits which will accrue and to weigh these against the modest level of heritage harm which will be caused and any other planning constraints and to reach a view on the final planning balance. During this process close scrutiny should be given to the level and nature of the need and the opportunities for providing the public benefits which would be delivered elsewhere, on other sites which would have a lesser adverse impact.

It is understood that the current site has not been identified within the continuing exercise to allocate housing sites for a new Local Plan, which has included not only consideration of the appropriate location for housing at a strategic level but also testing of sites against environmental constraints, including the impact on heritage.