

APPLICATION FOR FULL-PLANNING PERMISSION

CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/02179
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Aquetong Farm, Cresswell Lane, Lea, Malmesbury, SN16 9PE
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Erection of an agricultural cattle building
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve with Conditions

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The application site comprises agricultural land in the open countryside, southeast of the village of Lea. It is accessed from Cresswell Lane via an existing access that approaches existing agricultural buildings directly adjacent to the site. A public right-of-way, Footpath LECL11 runs across the land to north. There are no heritage assets within the vicinity of the site, it is not susceptible to flooding or drainage issues nor within a designated National Landscape.

PROPOSAL

The application comprises full planning permission for the erection of an agricultural building for the housing of cattle.

The building would be sited to the western side of an existing farm track which leads from the highway to the south, to two other existing agricultural buildings and the location of a third building, which has extant permission for its erection.

The building would measure approximately 30m in length, be 12m wide with eaves to 5.5m and ridge to 7m. The base of the walls would comprise concrete panels with timber Yorkshire boarding above and grey, fibre cement roof panels. Within each gable end a wide metal door is proposed which would only be as high as the concrete panels.

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
19/01675/APD - Agricultural & Forestry - Detailed matters Decision - Prior Approval Not Required Date: 18/3/2019 – Silage Barn
19/01680/APD - Agricultural & Forestry - Detailed matters Decision - Prior Approval Not Required Date: 18/3/2019 – Hay / Straw Storage
PL/2024/01505 - Prior notification: Building Decision - Prior Approval Not Required Date: 6/3/2024 – Erection of an agricultural building to store Hay/Straw
PL/2026/01943 - Prior notification: Building Decision - Prior Approval Not Required Date: 2/4/2026 – Two general purpose agricultural buildings

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Statutory Legislation:

National Planning Policy:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- National Design Guide

Development Plan:

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 application 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 13 Spatial Strategy; Malmesbury Community Area
- Core Policy 48 Supporting Rural Life
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Core Policy 51 Landscape
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 60 Sustainable Transport;

Draft Wiltshire Local Plan Policies

At Full Council on 19 May, the elected members of Wiltshire Council agreed to withdraw the emerging WLP. It will now be subject to a legal process to finalise its withdrawal - which is likely to happen in July or August (2026). The said Plan has no material weight for the purposes of the application.

Supplementary Planning Documents and other Guidance:

- Wiltshire Design Guide (adopted April 2024)
- Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026, adopted 2015 - including the Car Parking Strategy and Cycling Strategy, adopted 2015
- A Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Wiltshire: Wiltshire's Natural Environment Plan 2022-2030

ISSUES

The main issues that need to be addressed in this case include:

- Whether the development is acceptable in principle (CP 1 and 2)
- Whether the scheme constitutes high quality design (CP 57)

- Whether the scheme would have an acceptable impact upon the reasonable living conditions of the adjoining occupants (CP 57)
- Whether the scheme would have an acceptable landscape impact (CP 51)
- Whether there would be any harmful impacts upon protected species or priority habitats (CP 50)
- Whether the proposal results in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land (NPPF 187)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Lea, Garsdon and Cleverton PC: Comment

The PC note that Prior Approval for this permitted development is not required

WC Ecology: Comment

A Small Site Metric has been submitted and there are no other obvious ecological issues

REPRESENTATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), the application was publicised by way of:

- Neighbour notification letters sent to adjoining and nearby properties;
- A site notice displayed near the site;

These methods were used to inform interested parties and provide a period of 21 days for comments to be submitted.

No third part comments have been received in relation to the proposed application.

ASSESSMENT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

In accordance with this statutory requirement, this application has been assessed against the relevant policies of the Development Plan, including the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and, where applicable, any made Neighbourhood Plans. Consideration has also been given to the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as a material consideration in the assessment.

Principle of Development

Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy of the WCS establishes a hierarchy of settlements to guide where development should be focused. The policy prioritises growth in:

- Principal Settlements (e.g., Salisbury, Chippenham, Trowbridge) – main focus for strategic growth.
- Market Towns – support local services and employment; suitable for sustainable development.
- Local Service Centres – smaller towns and villages with a range of services; limited development supported.
- Large and Small Villages – development should be limited and respond to local needs.
- Outside the defined settlements – development is strictly controlled and generally not supported unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy of the WCS sets out how development will be distributed and delivered across Wiltshire. The policy emphasises:

- Sustainable patterns of growth, reducing the need to travel and supporting local services.
- Development should be plan-led, aligning with the settlement strategy and supported by infrastructure.
- Windfall development (not allocated in plans) must still comply with the principles of sustainable development.
- Development outside settlement boundaries is generally not permitted, unless it meets specific policy exceptions (as set out in paragraph 4.25 of the WCS).

Together, CP1 and CP2 ensure that new development is strategically located, sustainable, and supports the character and function of Wiltshire's communities.

The site lies in the open countryside for the purposes of planning and is distant from any settlements. The agricultural use is considered a typical countryside use and permission by way of the existing and extant barns have been granted and in which, the extent and nature of the farming activity has been accepted by the Local Planning Authority. Whilst the use of the land for agriculture does not require planning permission it is considered relevant to ensure that this additional barn will be associated with an ongoing agricultural enterprise of a scale and nature commensurate with the type and size of building for which planning permission is now sought.

Within the supporting documentation, the applicant has provided additional information in support of the proposal that clarifies the extent and nature of the enterprise to be supported by the barn. It is stated that the design of the building is primarily for housing cattle which graze across 180 acres of land which the applicant controls. The farm has approximately 400 head of cattle and the building will be utilized for modern day farm machinery and for livestock welfare with the open gable ends and typical slatted Yorkshire boarding.

As such, this proposed barn, together with the existing farmstead is considered reasonably necessary to support a rural enterprise and commensurate with the scale and nature of that enterprise. Therefore, the principle of development in this instance is considered acceptable, subject to site specific matters.

Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

Core Policy 57 of the WCS requires high-quality design that:

- Enhances local character.

- Responds to the natural, historic, and built environment.
- Retains important features (e.g., trees, hedges).
- Supports sustainable construction and compatibility with surrounding uses.
- Creates safe, legible, and accessible spaces.

Section 12 of the NPPF emphasises design that is:

- Visually attractive.
- Functionally effective.
- Contributes to the quality of the built environment.

The site lies within a relatively flat landscape, typified by open fields and soft landscaped boundaries with mature native hedgerows. Within this landscape are sporadic farmsteads, which have large barns and other agricultural buildings and the landscape is not entirely natural, being managed for farming activities. Longer views into the site are partially limited by the existing hedgerow boundary to the west of the site, the boundary to the highway and some tree cover.

The proposed barn is of a utilitarian appearance, consistent with its proposed use and contemporary standards. The type of development is considered entirely appropriate in an agricultural landscape, and as previously opined, is not more than reasonably necessary when taking into account the extent of the landholding, the head of cattle involved and when viewed in conjunction with the existing barns to support the enterprise.

However, should the agricultural use of the building cease in the near to medium term, the presence of such a building in the countryside would cease to be justified. Accordingly, the in principle support should be conditional on the building's removal should the cessation be within 10 years of any grant of permission.

Amenity

Core Policy 57 (Point vii) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to respect the amenity of existing occupants and ensure appropriate amenity levels for future residents.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly Paragraph 135, reinforces the need for development to provide a high standard of amenity for both existing and future users.

There are no residential properties within the vicinity of the site, with the nearest property being approximately 180m to the south of the site and to the south of Cresswell Lane.

Accordingly, as the proposed development would not cause issues with privacy or overbearing neighbouring amenity, the development is considered acceptable on this element.

Highways Impacts

The proposed development is not considered likely to be a significant trip generator or to significant impact in terms of traffic generation onto the single-track road known as Cresswell Lane, which already benefits from a gated access into the site.

The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in terms of highway impact, highway safety and access.

Ecology and Biodiversity

The proposal has been supported by way of a BNG Metric, base line plan and a BNG Post Development Plan. The Council's Ecology Officer has confirmed that no objection to the proposal would be raised and a condition to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the submitted plans can be appended to any grant of permission.

Conclusion

The proposed development is appropriate to the location in principle and in terms of its size and appearance, and to its function in support of a cattle rearing enterprise. The development complies with the relevant sections of the development plan and acceptable in its impacts. It is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions

RECOMMENDATION:

That Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to conditions

1. WA1 – Time
The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. WM13 – Plans
The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents, all received on 01 April 2026 :

Application Form
Design and Access Statement
Location Plan
Site Plan
Proposed Floor Plan
Proposed Front and Rear Elevations
Proposed Side Elevations
BNG Baseline Plan
BNG Post Development Plan

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. WB5 – Materials
4. 10 year use.
If within a period of 10 years from the date of this permission, the agricultural use of the building hereby permitted permanently ceases, the building and resulting demolition materials shall be removed within a period of three months and, within a

subsequent period of three months, the site shall be restored to a condition indistinguishable from its immediate surroundings.

REASON: To ensure that the agricultural buildings/structures are removed on cessation of their agricultural purposes, in the interests of protecting the rural character of the area.