

APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION

CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/02585
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full Planning Permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Nables Farm, Upper Seagry, Chippenham, SN15 5HB
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Erection of two new build dwellings in the alternative to Application PL/2025/01981.
RECOMMENDATION:	Consent be REFUSED

PROPOSAL

Following the granting of prior approval (PA) on 23.04.2025 under application PL/2025/01981 for 2no dwellings, this scheme is requesting planning permission for the following changes, which includes operational development as shown as figure 2 (with figure 1 showing the approved elevations):

- Increasing the size of the residential units
- Amending the dwellings from being attached to the adjacent building to semi-detached
- Increasing the roof height and subsequently increasing the roof pitch
- Installation of first floor, dormers and rooflights and other amendments to fenestration



Figure 1: approved elevations



Figure 2: proposed elevations

The submission does not clearly identify whether the scheme is intended to be a conversion or rebuild; however, the planning statement submitted indicates under 4.5 and 6.8 that *the new dwellings would produce a better result than the fallback option allowing for the conversion of the existing building to two dwellings [...] the design of the new scheme is intended to be an improvement over the existing approval.*

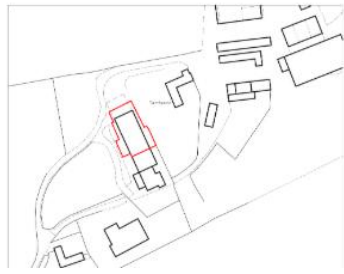


Figure 3: approved location plan

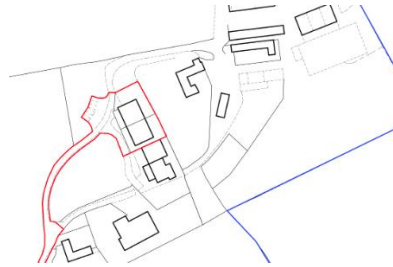


Figure 4: partial extract of proposed location plan

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is in open countryside and comprises part of a single storey agricultural building in Upper Seagry, a small village in the Chippenham Community Area. Upper Seagry does not benefit from a defined framework boundary, the nearest defined settlement is Sutton Benger which is more than 1.5km south-east; however, the site is part of an area with a made neighbourhood development plan (NDP).

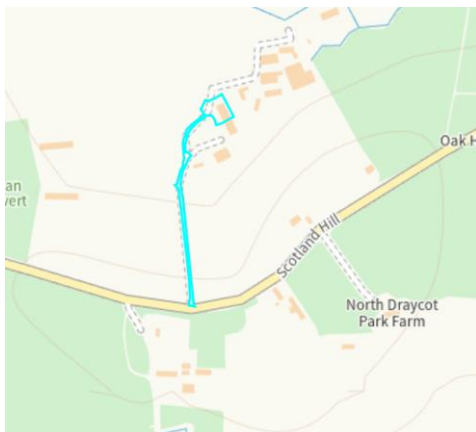


Figure 5: Map view of site (blue)



Figure 6: Aerial view (2024) of site (blue)

The building can be accessed via a private track which is connected (at the southern end) to classified C-road 'Scotland Hill'. There are no Public Rights of Way (PRoW) which cross, or run adjacent to, the site. There is no current local record of protected species at the site and the site is located within an area identified as being Flood Zone 1, the lowest risk of flooding from rivers/sea.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Relevant to the site:

- 16/08484/PNCOU: Notification for Prior Approval - Conversion of Existing Building (Units 3, 4 and 5) Falling within Class B8, for Use as 1 No. Dwelling (Class C3) Pursuant to Class P was refused under delegated powers on 21.10.2016
- 17/03098/FUL approved the: Retention of mobile chicken house (1) in association with upgraded track way on 22.05.2017

- 17/03100/FUL approved the: *Retention of mobile chicken house (2) in association with upgraded track way* on 22.05.2017
- 17/03101/FUL approved the: *Retention of mobile chicken house (3) in association with upgraded track way* on 22.05.2017
- 17/03127/FUL approved the: *Retention of mobile chicken house (4) in association with upgraded track way* on 22.05.2017
- PL/2025/01981 granted prior approval for [...] *Conversion of tractor shed to create 2 No new dwellings* on 23.04.2025

Recent, relevant planning history near the site:

Nables Farm (inter alia) :

- PL/2022/08822 a *Notification for Prior Approval under Class Q Conversion of 2no Farm Buildings to Create 4no. Dwellings* was granted prior approval on 02.02.2023
- PL/2021/07596 a *Prior Notification under Class Q for a Change of Use of Existing Agricultural Building to a Dwelling house with Associated Building Works* was granted prior approval on 23.09.2021
 - o PL/2024/0216 a *renewal of Approved Application PL/2021/07596 - Prior Approval under Class Q for a Change of Use of Existing Agricultural Building to a Dwelling house with Associated Building Operations* was granted prior approval on 24.04.2024
- PL/2024/00866 permitted the *Erection of five new build dwellings in the alternative to applications PL/2021/07596 and PL/2022/08822 which authorised the conversion of various buildings at Nables Farm, Upper Seagry, Wiltshire, creating five new dwellings* on 29.08.2024
 - o PL/2024/11306 granted the *Discharge of conditions 4 (Details of secure covered cycle parking), 6 (Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and 8 (Ecological Mitigation and Enhancement Plan) relating to application PL/2024/00866* on 02.04.2025

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Though considered as a whole, applicable Development Plan policies are listed below along with relevant legislation and guidance.

Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)

- CP1: Settlement Strategy
- CP2: Delivery Strategy
- CP10: Spatial Strategy for the Chippenham Community Area
- CP41: Sustainable Construction and Low-Carbon Energy
- CP48: Supporting Rural Life
- CP50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- CP51: Landscape
- CP57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
- CP61: Transport and Development

- CP64: Demand Management
- CP67: Flood Risks

Saved Policies of the North Wiltshire Local Plan (NWLP)

- H4: Residential Development in Rural Areas
- NE14: Trees, Site Features and the Control of Development

Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP4)

- Parking and Cycle standards (LTP3)

The Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan (WHSAP)

Wiltshire Design Guide (WDG)

Waste storage and collection: guidance for developers 2011

Wiltshire Council Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)

- Technical housing standards

HOUSING LAND SUPPLY

The Councils Housing Land Supply (HLS) Statement (base date: April 2024) was published in June 2025 and covers the HLS for Wiltshire and each Housing Market Area within Wiltshire as set out in the WCS. The HLS position identified under section 6 of the statement expresses that the current number of years deliverable supply is 2.42 years.

Briefing Note (No. 25 – 04) dated 18.06.2025 reiterates that position and states under section 2.3 that: *The council cannot demonstrate the requisite five-year housing land supply. The current position indicates there is a 2.42 years supply.*

ISSUES

The main issues in the consideration of this application are:

- Principle / Sustainable Development
- Design and Neighbouring Amenity
- Ecology / Biodiversity
- Highways Safety / Access
- Flood Risk / Drainage

CONSULTATION

Seagry Parish Council: Comment

Thank you for the opportunity of commenting on this Full planning application. My Council met last evening and has asked me to forward the following comments to you.

The Council notes that a Class Q permission exists and the consequences of this is that the residential use in theory been established, also that there are precedents for similar conversions and new builds at this site. The applicant is seeking to take advantage of this.

With this in mind, despite the Parish Council arguing that this is an unsustainable location your Council has given various permissions that to date have little benefit to the local community.

In response to previous applications of a similar nature the Council has felt that they needed to be consistent and reiterate previous views, albeit that your Council changed their own views in permitting previous development proposals.

The applicant again suggests that this is a sustainable location and given the existing built infrastructure there would be a positive contribution to the supply of much needed new houses, thus avoiding greenfield development and now able to add to this the precedent set by the previous approvals. The provision by this means allows for the increase of small-scale housing stock within the Parish that is designated as a small village category in the Local Plan allowing for very limited new development an important policy also within the adopted Seagry Neighbourhood Plan.

The Council reminds you that originally your Council took the view that planning policies pertaining to the area, would not permit additional units of permanent residential accommodation at this site.

With this in mind your Council has done an about-face in approving previous applications of a similar nature and with the planning situation changed the Parish Council is willing to support a change in views that might lead to future long-term occupants supporting the whole Seagry community.

In offering this support the Council retains a number of concerns that need to be addressed. Firstly, the Council is concerned with the cumulative effect creating a large-scale hamlet of dwellings in this location outside of the natural framework boundary of Upper Seagry.

Secondly, there are some local concerns expressed in regards to water supply and foul water drainage dispersal generally in this area. It is to be assumed that water supply to the dwellings will be adequate. No doubt Wessex Water will be consulted on this. There have also been concerns in regards to foul water effluent polluting local ditches. There needs to be assurance from the Environment Agency that the foul water treatment plant serving the whole built form in the Nables Farm area is fit for purpose.

The Council trusts that their views will be taken into consideration when the application is determined.

Councils Highways Team: No objection subject to conditions

Previous applications have well established the Nables Farm complex as a residential site and the addition of two number dwellings to be converted from redundant agricultural buildings will not cause a cumulative highway safety concern. Therefore, I would assume that the residential nature of the site in relation to these previous permissions has been established and a sustainability argument based on CP61 would not be accepted as a reason for refusal.

Parking can be provided to minimum standards and there is sufficient amenity area to allow for cycle storage to be provisioned and, with the inclusion of a condition requiring such details to be approved prior to occupation, a non-car related transport option can be accommodated.

Should the proposal be granted permission I would recommend [...] conditions be added.

REPRESENTATIONS

At the time of writing no public representations have been received.

ASSESSMENT

Principle / Sustainable development

Context

CP1 and CP2 of the WCS relate to the spatial strategy for Wiltshire, setting the policy foundations for sustainable development within the county. CP10 of the WCS expresses that development in the Chippenham Community Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Strategy set out in CP1. CP2 outlines that, other than in circumstances permitted by other policies within the WCS, development will not be permitted outside the limits of development, as defined on the policies map.

- Supporting text found at 4.25 identifies the exception policies within the WCS as being: CP34, CP37, CP39, CP40, CP44, CP46, CP47 and CP48.
- In addition to those exception policies, saved policy H4 of the NWLP provisions explicit exception criteria for new dwellings in the countryside, outside of framework boundaries.

The site is located outside of any defined settlement limits, in open countryside, and proposes 2 new dwellings and, as such, broadly conflicts with the aims of CP1, CP2 and CP10.

For conversion to residential purposes to meet the aims of CP48, set criteria must be satisfied, which includes adherence with the following summarised points, and clear evidence that employment, tourism, cultural and community uses are not practical propositions.

- i) the building must be structurally sound and capable of conversion without major rebuilding*
- ii) the use cannot detract from the character or appearance of the landscape or settlement, nor be detrimental to the amenities of residential areas*
- iii) there must be adequate access and infrastructure to serve the site*
- iv) there must be reasonable access to local services*

Assessment

The submission lacks clear evidence to indicate that the development would constitute a genuine conversion; conversely, the submission indicates that the level of redevelopment proposed would be tantamount to the creation of new dwellings in the open countryside. The provided covering letter (prepared by LPC, dated April 2026) does not provide evidence to suggest that the new dwellings are required to meet the employment needs of rural areas.

Furthermore, whilst it is not the LPAs view that the proposed development should be taken to be a conversion, the submission lacks functional or financial evidence to prove that the sequentially preferable uses (employment, tourism, cultural and community uses) are not practical propositions. The proposed development therefore does not meet any of the exceptions identified within CP48 and does not apply to this scheme.

The PA offers a fallback position for some residential development in this countryside setting; however, the fallback relates explicitly to a conversion which is fundamentally different to the scheme as proposed under this application. Given that the scheme granted PA is both practical and viable, the HLS benefit associated with residential development would be achievable without any requirement to grant permission for a scheme that has a greater degree of harm by virtue of the proposed new-build form and departure from the exception criteria established by CP48.

Tilted Balance

Notwithstanding the above, the Council have accepted that the requisite housing land supply cannot be demonstrated and as such, for applications including housing provision, the policies which are most important for determining the application should be considered out-of-date.

The NPPF directs, under paragraph 11, that in these circumstances planning permission should be granted unless one or both of the following apply:

- (i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- (ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to*

sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

Paragraph 14 of the NPPF goes on to further express that:

In situations where the presumption (at paragraph 11d) applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided the following apply: (a) the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan five years or less before the date on which the decision is made; and (b) the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement.

For the avoidance of doubt, whilst there is an NDP covering the application area the NDP was made in May 2021; consequently, at the time of writing (June 2026) the requirements of paragraph 14 of the NPPF have not been met.

Paragraph 11d(i) Context

The site is located within flood zone 1 and has not been identified as being in an area at high risk of surface or ground water flooding. The site is not located within (or in close proximity to) a SSSI, SAC, Ramsar, SPA, or CWS and is not designated as green belt or local green space.

Furthermore, the site is not within a National Landscape or Conservation Area, is not part of a National Park area, or defined as Heritage Coast, irreplaceable habitat, or a designated heritage asset.

Paragraph 11d(ii) Context

The scheme is not for major development and, whilst the site is in open countryside, there are dwellings adjacent and as such the scheme would not result in the creation of isolated homes in the countryside.

Consultation with the Councils Highways Team resulted in no objection to the suitability of the existing access or sustainability of the site.

Design and Neighbouring Amenity

Context

Policy CP41 of the WCS relates to sustainable construction and low-carbon energy and encourages development including building conversions to incorporate design measures to reduce energy demand.

CP57 of the WCS and SNP5 of the NDP requires development to achieve a high standard of design and to be positively designed to conserve the specific context and overall qualities of Upper and

Lower Seagry, CP51 of the WCS further requires development to protect and conserve landscape character.

Section 9.2 of the WDG sets expectations around private amenity space, providing the following minimum standards (subject to site specific constraints) for gardens, applicable to houses:

Type of private amenity space	1 storey houses	2 storey houses	3 storey houses
Minimum rear garden area	Equal footprint of dwelling	Equal footprint of dwelling	Equal footprint of dwelling
Minimum length of garden	9m if north facing, 5m otherwise	12m if north facing, 10m otherwise	15m if north facing, 10m otherwise

Technical housing standards deal with internal space within new dwellings. Setting requirements for the Gross Internal floor Area (GIA) of new dwellings at a defined level of occupancy as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of the home. There are set criteria for measuring and the following summarised nationally described space standards are applicable for assessment of the proposed 2no. 5-bedroom, 2-storey houses:

Bedrooms	Bed spaces	Minimum gross internal floor area	Required built-in storage
5 bed	6 person	110	3.5
5 bed	7 person	119	3.5
5 bed	8 person	128	3.5

The councils SPD on 'waste storage and collection' provides guidance for developers and includes the following summarised points relating to the external storage of waste:

- (5.4.1) Waste storage areas should be appropriately located [...] within the boundary of the property [...] These storage facilities should not obstruct sight lines for pedestrians, drivers and cyclists and should not interfere with pedestrian or vehicular access to buildings.
- (5.4.2) External storage spaces must be on hard standings, and they should be away from windows [...]
- (5.4.3) Rear-garden storage is preferable where possible provided that there is a suitable route to the collection point [...]

Assessment

The application site is in open countryside, outside of a defined framework boundary, forming part of a cluster of buildings which have incrementally been converted to residential use over the years. The existing building is a utilitarian agricultural structure which has a simple form and proportions; the PA assessment of design and external appearance was made with the understanding that the building would retain its basic agricultural form and character.

The proposal seeks full planning permission for the erection of two new dwellings in lieu of the approved PA conversion, with the submission relying on the PA fallback position to justify the new development. Whilst the footprint may broadly reflect the existing building, the proposed design introduces a materially different form and appearance through an increased roof height, steeper roof pitch, dormer windows, a semi-detached form, and more clearly domestic design. The cumulative impact of all changes proposed would result in development that would no longer read as a conversion or as a modest rural building, rather as a pair of new building dwellings with a suburban character.

The provided planning statement suggests that the new proposal would be more sustainable than the consented PA conversion; however, there has been no information provided to substantiate that view, nor is there any reference to the inclusion of renewable energy solutions. The provided plans do, however, indicate that a vehicle charging point would be provided and that GIA would be achievable for both dwellings.

Given that the wider site has benefitted from piecemeal permissions, resulting in residential development that has altered the character of the setting over time, careful consideration has been made as to whether the existence of those permissions and evolution of the setting should justify further intensification of residential development in this area. It is acknowledged that there has been a significant weakening of the agricultural character at Nables Farm over time; however, the existence of residential permissions and units of the adjoining site does not establish a precedent for a pair of suburban-design dwellings.

Moreover, the consented PA scheme relates to land directly adjacent to the building only, and the location plan under this application indicates an increase to that residential use of land, away from the cluster of existing consented units, encroaching residential use further into the open countryside setting to the west. The area of land proposed for residential use is materially different to that which was consented under the PA scheme and the scheme would result in residential creep beyond the established built form and, consequently, harm to the rural setting.

Each planning application must be determined on its own merits and the circumstances of the earlier permissions at Nables Farm do not override the requirement to assess the current proposal independently against applicable planning policies. The development proposed under this application fails to demonstrate high standard of sustainable construction or contribution towards the reduction of carbon emissions and would result in harm to the character and appearance of the site and its rural setting, contrary to the aims of CP41, CP51 and CP57 of the WCS as well as SNP5 of the NDP.

Ecology / Biodiversity

Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is a way of creating and improving natural habitats and ensures that development has a measurably positive impact on biodiversity, compared to what was there before development.

Policy CP50 of the WCS outlines that Wiltshire's natural environment is one of its greatest assets and identifies protection measures necessary for consideration when assessing the impact of development on biodiversity and geodiversity.

The application site is not subject to ecological designations, and, at the time of writing, there are no records of protected species at the site; however, the aims of CP50 for all new development to seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity remains applicable for the scheme.

The absence of any indicative proposals or supporting information at this stage indicates that there has been very limited consideration of ecological matters and the proposal therefore fails to demonstrate meaningfully consideration of the biodiversity enhancement aims of CP50.

Whilst the absence of biodiversity enhancements at the scheme design stage is indicative of a broader failure to respond positively to relevant development plan policies, it is acknowledged that biodiversity enhancement measures could be secured by condition, should the scheme be otherwise acceptable. Given the issues already identified within this report and that the receipt of further biodiversity enhancement information would not overcome those issues, further information during the course of this application was not invited.

Highways Safety / Access

Policy CP61 of the WCS requires new development to be served by safe access to the highway network.

Policy CP64 of the WCS relates to demand management measures which includes car parking management and standards.

The scheme proposes parking and cycle storage and will utilise an existing access. The Councils Highways team were consulted and raise no objection subject to conditions.

Flood Risk / Drainage

Policy CP67 of the WCS relates to flood risk and provides direction for development proposed in flood zones 2 and 3 and includes the requirement for development to reduce the rate of rainwater run-off and to improve rainwater infiltration to soil and ground, unless site or environmental conditions make these measures unsuitable.

The site is on land in flood zone 1, at the lowest risk of fluvial flooding and is not at high risk of flooding from surface or groundwater sources. Given that the development does not include significant changes to the level of impermeable area at the site, it is not considered that granting planning permission will result in an increased flood risk at, or adjacent to, the site.

SUMMARY AND PLANNING BALANCE

The application has been submitted following the grant of PA for 2no. dwellings; consequently, there is a fall-back position for conversion to residential use at the site. The scheme proposes redevelopment of the site in lieu of the consented conversion and is requesting an increased residential amenity land to serve the dwellings.

The tilted balance applies at the time of determining this application. The scheme proposes 2no dwellings which would bring about some benefit to the HLS for Wiltshire. No further benefits have been indicated within the application submission; it is nonetheless acknowledged that some limited localised economic benefit would be likely to arise during the construction phase of the development, and it is anticipated that there would be some ongoing economic benefit when the dwellings are occupied by virtue of receipt of council tax etc.

There is, however, a realistic and deliverable residential fallback under PA and as such the delivery of housing on the site is not dependent on the grant of planning permission for the scheme proposed under this application. On this occasion, and for the period of time where the PA consent is in effect, the HLS benefit is somewhat diluted.

The scheme fails to meet the aims of development policies relating to sustainable construction and biodiversity enhancement which, when considered together, represents poor engagement with the development plan policies taken as a whole; however, these points could reasonably be addressed by the inclusion of conditions and as such represent neutral harm in the planning balance.

The site is in open countryside, in a location where residential development is not normally permitted. The scheme has not demonstrated meeting exceptions for rural development provisioned under CP48 of the WCS and, whilst the PA offers a fallback position to justify some residential development, the PA fallback relates explicitly to a conversion which is materially different to the scheme as proposed under this application.

The proposal for 2no dwellings in this rural location would undermine the established spatial strategy of directing new housing to sustainable locations. Furthermore, the new-build dwellings proposed under this application fail to retain the form and character of the existing building and proposes a materially larger expanse of residential land which would, together, result in harm to the character and appearance of the site and its rural setting.

The identified harm outweighs the benefits of the proposal, and the PA fallback position does not justify the approval of a scheme with the same housing outcome that would result in visual harm.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That planning permission be REFUSED for the following reasons:

1. The application site is within open countryside, and the submission does not provide clear evidence that the scheme meets the exceptions for rural residential development set out within Core Policy 48 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy. In particular, the proposal does not genuinely constitute the conversion or re-use of a rural building by virtue of the level of redevelopment and alteration proposed.
2. The development proposes an increased height, altered roof form, semi-detached form and overall architectural remodelling of an existing agricultural building. The level of demolition and re-development required to facilitate the amended design amounts to a

substantial rebuild and reconstruction rather than a genuine conversion of the existing building. The proposal is tantamount to 2 new dwellings and fails to respect the simple, functional character of the host building. The proposal would result in a dwelling which would fundamentally alter and erode the agricultural design of the building and fails to achieve a high standard of design by virtue of not responding positively to the countryside setting, contrary to the aims of Core Policy 51 and Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

3. The development proposes a materially larger area of land to be brought into residential use when compared with the scheme granted prior approval under PL/2025/01981, introducing an expanded residential curtilage that incorporates additional areas of undeveloped land. The expansion represents unjustified encroachment into the open countryside which would erode the rural character and result in residential creep into the adjacent agricultural parcel, exacerbated by the perception and effects of domestic activity and paraphernalia, contrary to the aims of Core Policy 51 and Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

INFORMATIVES TO APPLICANT:

- For the avoidance of doubt, the following plans and documents were considered in reaching this decision:
Application form, signed and dated 21.04.2026
Planning statement, prepared by LPC, WSLC.LPC2065, dated April 2026
Location Plan, LPC 2065 EX 409, dated February 2026, received 21.04.2026
Plan – Existing, LPC 2065 EX 403 A, dated November 2024, received 21.04.2026
Elevations – Existing, LPC 2065 EX 404 A, dated November 2024, received 21.04.2026
Site Plan – Proposed, LPC 2065 PR 410, dated February 2026, received 21.04.2026
West & North Elevations – Proposed, LPC 2065 PR 413, dated February 2026, received 21.04.2026
East & South Elevations – Proposed, LPC 2065 PR 414, dated February 2026, received 21.04.2026
Plan – Proposed Ground Floor, LPC 2065 PR 411, dated February 2026, received 21.04.2026
Plan – Proposed First Floor, LPC 2065 PR 412, dated February 2026, received 21.04.2026
- In reaching this decision, the Local Planning Authority has had full regard to the fallback position represented by the extant Class Q Prior Approval for the conversion of the two dwellings, as well as the acknowledged shortfall in the Council's Housing Land Supply; however, given that the Class Q conversion is both practical and viable, the fallback position is understood to allow residential development to take place without the degree of harm arising from the proposed new-build form.
- On its website Wiltshire Council has made available statutory policies in the Core Strategy, Supplementary Planning Documents, Planning Briefs and other informal written guidance. The Council also offer a full suite of pre-application advice services; however, on this

occasion, the application was unfortunately submitted without any meaningful pre-application discussions.