

Application Reference: PL/2026/02717

Site Address: Land at Home Farm, Boreham Road, Warminster

Proposal: Full Planning Permission for Residential Development Comprising 135 Dwellings

Dear Case Officer,

I wish to formally object to speculative planning application PL/2026/02717 for the proposed development of 135 dwellings on land at Home Farm, Boreham Road, Warminster.

While I recognise the need to provide new housing, this proposal represents an inappropriate and unsustainable form of development on a highly sensitive greenfield site. The application would cause significant and irreversible harm to the natural environment, designated heritage assets, landscape character and settlement identity, whilst placing additional pressure on local infrastructure. For the reasons set out below, I respectfully request that planning permission is refused.

1. Harm to Biodiversity and the Natural Environment

The application site comprises approximately 11 hectares of greenfield agricultural land that currently provides valuable habitat and ecological connectivity for a wide range of wildlife species. The scale of development proposed would result in substantial habitat loss, fragmentation and disturbance arising from construction activity, increased human presence, lighting and traffic.

The site's hedgerows, mature vegetation and open countryside contribute significantly to local biodiversity and ecological networks. Development of this scale risks undermining the ecological value of the area and would result in the permanent loss of undeveloped countryside that currently supports wildlife and natural habitats.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) seeks to minimise impacts on biodiversity, secure measurable net gains for nature and contribute to the protection and enhancement of ecological networks. Given the environmental sensitivity of the site, the Council must be satisfied that the proposal fully complies with statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements and delivers genuine ecological enhancement rather than merely compensating for environmental loss.

2. Unacceptable Harm to Heritage Assets

The proposed development lies within the setting of the nationally significant Battlesbury and Scratchbury Hillfort Scheduled Monuments and immediately adjoins the Bishopstrow Conservation Area.

The significance of these designated heritage assets derives not only from their physical remains but also from their historic landscape setting and relationship with the surrounding countryside. The introduction of a large residential estate in this location would fundamentally alter that setting, urbanising an area that currently contributes to their significance and appreciation.

It is particularly concerning that previous planning assessments and inspector comments relating to this site raised serious concerns regarding whether development could be accommodated without causing unacceptable harm to heritage assets. Those concerns remain highly relevant.

The proposal would erode the historic character of the area, diminish important views and result in lasting harm to the setting of heritage assets. The NPPF requires great weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets and their settings, irrespective of the level of harm identified. In this case, the potential heritage impacts weigh heavily against the proposal.

3. Loss of Rural Buffer and Settlement Identity

Home Farm provides an important area of open countryside that separates Warminster from the neighbouring settlement of Bishopstrow. This land performs a vital function in maintaining the distinct identity, character and visual separation of both communities.

Development of 135 dwellings would substantially reduce this important green gap and create a clear perception of settlement coalescence. The gradual erosion of countryside between settlements is contrary to established planning principles aimed at preventing urban sprawl and safeguarding the character of rural communities.

The proposal would permanently urbanise a prominent area of countryside and undermine the distinct identities of Warminster and Bishopstrow.

4. Highway Safety and Access Concerns

The proposed access arrangements raise significant concerns regarding highway safety, capacity and local amenity.

A development of 135 dwellings would generate a substantial increase in vehicle movements, together with additional pedestrian and cycle activity. There are legitimate concerns regarding whether Boreham Road can safely accommodate this increase in traffic without adverse impacts on road safety, congestion and the quality of life of existing residents.

Furthermore, the creation of a new access appears likely to require alteration or removal of sections of the existing historic boundary wall along Boreham Road. This feature contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area and forms part of the historic approach to Warminster. Its loss would represent an unnecessary erosion of local character and heritage value.

5. Harm to Landscape Character, Tourism and the Local Economy

The rural landscape surrounding Bishopstrow forms an important part of the area's character and attractiveness. The countryside setting contributes significantly to the appeal of the area for residents, visitors and businesses alike.

The proposed development would urbanise a prominent greenfield site and diminish the rural qualities that support local tourism and hospitality businesses. The setting of nearby establishments, including Bishopstrow Hotel, one of the largest employers in Warminster, is closely linked to the historic and countryside character of the area.

The Council should carefully consider the wider economic implications of permitting development that would permanently alter a landscape that contributes to local tourism, employment and economic activity.

6. Conflict with the Development Plan and Speculative Nature of the Proposal

The application site is not allocated for residential development within the adopted Wiltshire Development Plan and therefore constitutes speculative development on an environmentally sensitive greenfield site.

The planning system is founded upon a plan-led approach, and planning decisions should be made in accordance with the adopted development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The absence of a housing allocation for this site is therefore a significant material consideration.

Furthermore, the proposal seeks to develop a substantial area of open countryside beyond the established settlement boundary. The NPPF recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supports its protection from inappropriate development. The loss of this prominent greenfield site would result in irreversible landscape harm and further weaken the separation between Warminster and Bishopstrow.

This site has previously been identified as having significant constraints, particularly in relation to heritage impacts, landscape character and settlement separation. The fact that the land has not been allocated for housing despite previous consideration should carry significant weight in the determination of this application.

The absence of a development plan allocation, combined with the significant harms identified above, demonstrates that this is not an appropriate location for development of this scale. The environmental, heritage and landscape impacts would significantly outweigh any benefits associated with the delivery of additional housing on this site.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, I believe the proposal would result in substantial and irreversible harm to biodiversity, heritage assets, landscape character, settlement identity and local amenity. It represents speculative development on an unallocated greenfield site that is fundamentally unsuited to development at the scale proposed.

I therefore respectfully urge Wiltshire Council to refuse planning permission for Application PL/2026/02717.

Yours faithfully,

Name: Miss Frances Osborne

