

Enhancement of holiday accommodation complex use with additional recreational and operational facilities and uses

Hesdin Estate, Chapmanslade, Westbury,
Wiltshire, BA13 4GF

Planning Statement

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Document Information

About

This document has been prepared for Hesdin Estate by Squires Planning.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Squires Planning in support of a planning application by Hesdin Estate for the:

“Enhancement of holiday accommodation complex use with additional recreational and operational facilities and uses”

- 1.2. This document provides an overview of the site, its context and the proposed development before considering the material considerations relevant to the determination of the application.

- 1.3. In addition to this requisite application form and this Planning Statement, the planning application submission comprises the following documents and plans:

- Site Location Plan
- Site Plan
- Landscape Plan
- Planting Plans
- Illustrative Masterplan
- Landscape Sections
- Site sections
- Tree Pit Details
- Landscape Strategy (Greenhalgh Landscape Architects)
- Proposed Plant Schedule (Greenhalgh Landscape Architects)
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & BNG Feasibility Assessment (Beamsley Ecology)
- Hesdin Estate BNG Metric (Beamsley Ecology)
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (K-Ten Consulting)
- Historic Environment Assessment (Armour Heritage)
- Economic Case for the Hesdin Estate (Hesdin Estate)

- 1.4. Overall the evidence submitted alongside the application demonstrates that the proposal constitutes sustainable development that will lead to positive environmental, economic and social gains.

Site & Situation

- 1.5. The site is situated to the east of Chapmanslade adjacent to the A36 approximately halfway between Westbury (to the west) and Frome (to the east) within an area of countryside. Access to the site is achieved via an existing road that runs from the A36 to the A3098. The site comprises 9 properties created via both conversion works and new builds (3 properties still under construction), as well as

associated ancillary structures including garaging and swimming pools, and landscaped garden areas. There are dedicated car parking areas on site together with two vehicular accesses to the public highway.

- 1.6. Thoulstone Farmhouse (now known as 'Hesdin Hall'), situated on site is a Grade II Listed Building (List entry no. 1036524), originally listed in 1968. The site also contains a number of other structures which are deemed to be curtilage listed. The site also falls within a locally designated landscape area. Other than these heritage and landscape considerations the site is not affected by any other planning designations.
- 1.7. The site can be seen in its context below in Figure 1.

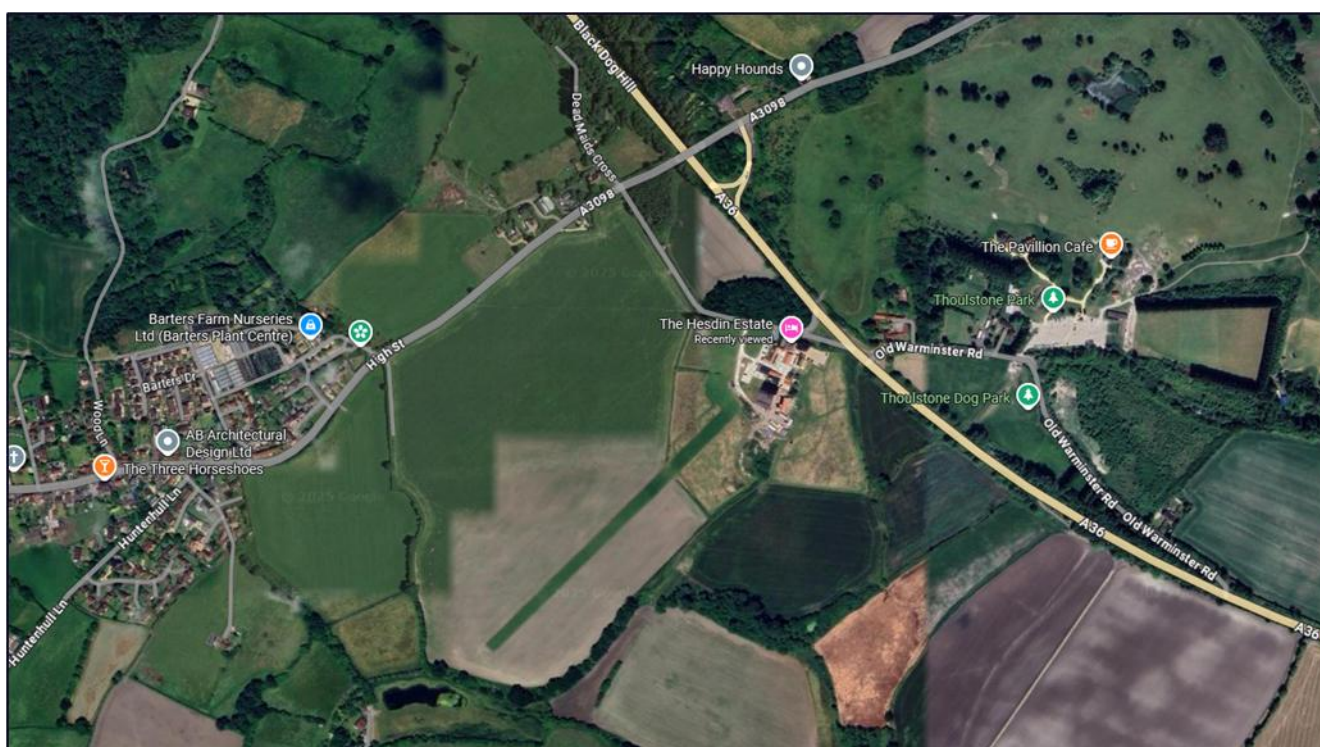


Figure 1 - Site Context

Planning History

- 1.8. The site has an extensive and complicated planning history.
- 1.9. Of particular relevance is planning permission PL/2024/09973, granted by Wiltshire Council on 16th May 2025. The permission grants the flexible use of the site for C3 dwellinghouses and as a holiday accommodation complex (Sui Generis) in line with the provisions of Schedule 2, Part 3, Class V of the GPDO.
- 1.10. The site is currently operating under the holiday accommodation use (see <https://hesdin.co.uk/>). It is the intention of the applicant to enhance this use and ultimately maintain it as the permanent use of the site, hence this proposal. The current operation provides luxury holiday homes with space for up to 140 guests (upon completion of the last 3 units).
- 1.11. Other relevant planning history includes:

- PL/2024/09972, granted on 16 May 2025, permitting the retention of altered internal site access and additional car parking
- PL/2023/06957, granted on 3rd November 2023, permitting the erection of a new tennis court and extension of the existing car park.

1.12. In addition to the above the site history includes various prior approvals, full permissions and listed building consents for the change of use and/or renovation, conversion and extension of existing buildings on site, such as:

- PL/2022/05697 – Proposed conversion and extension to provide ancillary residential accommodation. Granted 12/09/2022
- PL/2022/02339 - Proposed conversion of existing grain silo and associated change of use from agricultural to ancillary residential accommodation. Granted 18/07/2022
- PL/2021/10085 - Conversion of existing farm outbuilding to create single residential dwelling and proposed extension. Listed building consent granted 28/01/2022
- PL/2021/06497 - erection of three residential dwellings, Granted 30/09/2021

2. The Proposed Development

- 2.1. This description of proposed development is *“Enhancement of holiday accommodation complex use with additional recreational and operational facilities and uses”*.
- 2.2. The proposed development comprises the enhancement of the existing holiday accommodation complex by way of the provision of additional landscaping, and recreational and operational facilities. Notably, the proposal includes: formal use of the site as identified as part of the holiday accommodation complex; significantly enhanced landscaping including extensive new planting; the re-introduction of an orchard and pond(s) at the site; replacement of previously lost hedgerow, plus leisure facilities (padel courts), additional car parking and the provision of a new building to provide appropriate storage and servicing facilities for the continuing upkeep and management of the estate.
- 2.3. Submitted as part of the application is a Landscape Masterplan (*Drawing No. 354_GLA_00_00_DR_L_1002 RevP2*) which sets out the proposals in full.
- 2.4. The Landscape Masterplan includes:
- A replanted and reinstated orchard area in the northwest corner of the site
 - New woodland belts and copses, and other boundary planting, reinstating historical boundaries and improving ecological connections around the site boundary
 - Significant new planting within the site including new trees and wildlife meadow
 - Introduction of SUDs, swales and attenuation ponds, and the opening-up of an existing culverted ditch
 - A new natural swimming pond (circa 20m x 25m)
 - A circular footpath within the site providing pedestrian access through the enhanced landscape
 - Several fenced livestock areas
 - The remodelling and extension of the existing eastern car park
 - Provision of Padel courts (in the approximate location of previously approved tennis courts)
 - A store and services building close to the western edge of the site, screened by boundary planting and the proposed orchard
- 2.5. The proposal has been purposefully landscape and ecology led with the intention of delivering significant environmental gains, whilst concurrently enhancing the attraction of the site (especially for visitors) and thereby its longer-term economic success.
- 2.6. Additionally, the proposals have been informed by SUDs principles, which contribute to enhancing and maximising the environmental gains and benefits to be delivered by the proposal. For example, the opening-up of the existing culverted ditch as part of the landscape & ecology-led SUDs approach.
- 2.7. Collectively, the integrated landscaping, ecology and SUDs enhancements will provide a coherent feel and appearance to the site, whilst also having the benefits of offering screening and delivering

significant biodiversity net gain, as well as improving the economic vitality of the site and its contribution to the local economy.

- 2.8. The proposal is also clearly informed by heritage considerations, including consideration of the potential impact of the proposal on Hesdin Hall (Thoulstone Farmhouse) and its setting. The accompanying Historic Environment Assessment (HEA), provides detailed examination, assessment and consideration of the heritage aspects of relevance to the proposal.
- 2.9. Where new operational development is proposed (including the car park, padel courts and storage/service building) these are sensitively accommodated within the overall integrated landscape, ecology and SUDs elements, and the proposed location for these new site facilities closely matches the location of similar proposals previously approved.
- 2.10. The siting of the proposed padel courts and extended car park, close to the north eastern corner of the site, broadly aligns with the car park and tennis court provision approved by the Council via planning permission PL/2023/06957.
- 2.11. The location of the proposed storage/service building close to the site's western boundary, is also approximate to the location of a service/storage building permitted by PL/2021/10499. And in addition to the location of the building now proposed being more contained within the site with more landscape screening, the storage/service building now proposed is significantly smaller than that previously approved, with a footprint of some 150 sq.m and ridge height of 5m, compared to the previously approved 278 sq.m footprint and 7m ridge height.
- 2.12. The proposed extended car park and new service/storage building facilities are intended to help address operational needs of the site. The service/storage building will be utilised primarily for estate maintenance purposes including vehicle/equipment storage, food store, and inclusion of a commercial kitchen to provide on-site food offerings to guests (meals being delivered to the holiday homes).
- 2.13. The padel courts will replace the permitted previously proposed tennis courts and will be for the sole use of guests.
- 2.14. The additional parking, in collaboration with existing site parking, will enable all staff and visitor/guests parking associated with the site use and operations to be accommodated within discrete areas of the site.
- 2.15. The enhanced facilities and uses are designed to secure, improve and help 'future-proof' the on-going attraction of the holiday accommodation 'offer' of the site and will, concurrently, provide more opportunity for additional economic benefit by adding more capability to host complementary activities such as wedding receptions, corporate events and similar corporate/social gatherings.
- 2.16. The purpose of the proposal is therefore to enhance the existing holiday accommodation use of the site in the interests of supporting the continuing and longer-term success of the site. The proposal will help facilitate an extended, complementary use of the site, which in turn will contribute towards a more competitive and diversified business, providing more secure, longer-term economic benefits. Those benefits include support for other local services, inward expenditure within the local economy, and the provision of additional jobs. The supporting services and additional jobs associated with the site and the enhancement proposals now brought forward, are expected to be locally sourced, thereby providing a social benefit through the strengthening of the local rural economy, its employment opportunity and the communities it supports.

3. Pre-application Submission

- 3.1. A request for formal pre-application advice from Wiltshire Council was submitted on 7th November 2025.
- 3.2. Included in the supporting material submitted was an illustrative masterplan, planning statement, plus supporting evidence in the form of:
- Pre-application Landscape Report
 - Historic Environment Assessment
 - Flood Risk Assessment
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and BNG Feasibility Assessment
 - Report on the Economic Case for Hesdin Estate Planning Application
- 3.3. The Council issued its written pre-application response on 6th January 2026. Key aspects of the officers' pre-application advice included:
- Confirmation of relevant planning policies applicable to the site, and confirmation there is no applicable Neighbourhood Plan.
 - At the time of the Council's written pre-app comments being issued, the Council was at Regulation 24 stage of its emerging Local Plan, and the pre-application officer advice included reference to Wiltshire Local Plan Pre-Submission Draft 2020-2038 policies as a material consideration. However, on 19th May 2026 Wiltshire Council voted to withdraw the emerging Local Plan from examination, with the effect that the emerging Local Plan is now withdrawn and therefore does not constitute a material consideration.
 - Acknowledgement that the site comprises Grade 2 agricultural land, but that the Wiltshire Core Strategy does not include specific policy constraints on best and most valuable (BMV) agricultural land, and that the site area (approximately 5.5ha excluding current buildings) falls well below the 20ha threshold for consultation with Natural England.
 - Confirmation that the planning history of the site, including the consented use of accommodation for residential or tourism use, is a relevant consideration, and the potential benefits to the existing attraction should be afforded weight in the planning balance.
 - Officer's views were that "*more permanent landscaping features and built form*" associated with the development as proposed at pre-application stage, would "*alter and erode the character of the landscape*". It was accepted, however, that the planning and soft landscaping "*does not necessarily constitute development*", and the potential change in character resulting from the planting, landscaping and recreational use elements of the proposal "*would be less likely to be considered visually harmful to the landscape*".
 - Officers considered 'landscape character' to be of relevance to the "*historic context*" of the listed Hesdin Hall, and that potential changes to the 'character' of the landscape would

therefore influence the “*legibility*” of the agricultural farmstead by way of positioning the former farm complex within landscaped grounds rather than an overtly agricultural landscape.

- Officers considered elements of the landscaping proposals, such as native hedgerow, would be positive enhancements, whilst also recognising the benefits provided by the proposed enclosure of the site, visual mitigation from PRow, and biodiversity enhancements, which would be achieved by the development with only ‘relatively localised’ impact on landscape character.
- In respect of landscape impact, the officer advice concluded that *“there would be significant change to the landscape but that such change may not be considered so harmful or incompatible with landscape character as to warrant a wholly negative response on landscape character grounds alone given that the scheme comprises significant soft landscaping which would also create opportunities for ecological enhancement”*.
- Officers, with reference to a planning inspector’s comments for a previous appeal at the site (ref: PL/2022/05649), considered the site’s agricultural setting to be a key contribution to the appreciation of the listed Hesdin Hall, and that the quantum of development proposed at the pre-application stage would cause significant harm to the setting of the listed building.
- Confirmation from the local highway authority (Wiltshire Council Highways) that the proposal was unlikely to generate an increased level of traffic; would be unlikely to attract a highway objection, and; that the purpose of the proposed car park (ie: staff, guests or both) should be clarified by any subsequent planning application submission.
- Officers advised that the site lies within a consultation zone for Greater Horseshoe bats associated with the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bats SAC and an Appropriate Assessment (AA) would be necessary. The AA would be undertaken by Wiltshire Council but informed by information submitted by the applicant, including clarification on any vegetation to be removed and proposed mitigation.

3.4. These comments have been taken into account in the preparation of the application now submitted, and the relevant supporting information accompanying the planning application provides evidence, as appropriate, including in respect of heritage, flooding and ecology.

3.5. Notably, the scope of the development proposed by this application has been reviewed and revised following the pre-application feedback from the Council. Revisions to the scheme originally proposed at pre-application stage include:

- Removal of pedestrian path from orchard area
- Re-siting of store/service building
- Removal of greenhouse/potting shed
- Removal of marque

3.6. The revisions to the scheme significantly reduce the amount of new buildings proposed. Excluding the ‘hard surface’ padel court and car park extension, only the store/service building is retained from that previous proposed, and that building itself is relocated within the site with more effective screening provided by boundary planting and a re-planned orchard area now uninterrupted by pedestrian routes.

4. Planning Policy

- 4.1. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 confirm that planning decisions should be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (Dec 2024) (“the NPPF”) provides further clarity on how this should be done in the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out at paragraph 11 which states:

“For decision-taking this means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date [emphasis added], granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear 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.”

- 4.3. For this site, the adopted development plan comprises:
- Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015)
 - Saved Policy C3, West Wiltshire District Plan (1st Alteration) (adopted June 2004)
- 4.4. Policy contained in the NPPF is also a material consideration as well as other relevant policy guidance and legislation.
- 4.5. The most relevant policies are outlined below.

Wiltshire Core Strategy, adopted 2015

- 4.6. **Core Policy 39: Tourist Development** - principally addresses the provision of new tourist development, including providing criteria that tourist development outside settlements is expected to satisfy. The policy supports tourist and visitor facilities in or close to local services centres and villages (including Chapmanslade which is a defined Local Service Centre) and, in recognizing the significance of tourism to the Wiltshire economy, requires ‘tourism’ development to have regard to providing adequate facilities, enhancing enjoyment and improving the financial viability of the attraction, in addition to considerations relating to the need to protect landscapes and environmentally sensitive sites.
- 4.7. The policy confirms that *“Extensions to existing facilities should be appropriate in scale to their location and help to ensure the future viability of the business”* and the policy also supports development outside of settlements subject to criteria, including that the (new) facilities are in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction; that no suitable alternative existing building exists;

that the scale and use of the building is compatible with its landscape setting; that the building is served by adequate access, and; that the site has reasonable access to local services and a local employment base.

- 4.8. **Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity** - supports the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity features, and opportunities to enhance biodiversity and ecological connectivity. The supporting text to Policy 50 encourages opportunities to enhance the natural environment for wildlife including “*through landscaping ... [and] ...Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems*”.
- 4.9. **Core Policy 51: Landscape** - expects development to protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character. It confirms that “*Proposals should be informed by and sympathetic to the distinctive character areas identified in the relevant Landscape Character Assessment(s) and any other relevant assessments and studies.*” The supporting text to Policy 51 advises that the term ‘landscape’ within the context of the policy, refers to both built and natural environment.
- 4.10. The landscape character considerations applicable to the site, are addressed by the Landscape Strategy and Landscape and Visual Appraisal, accompanying the planning application, which includes consideration of existing Landscape Character Assessment evidence, including the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment, April 2004.
- 4.11. **Core Policy 58: Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment** - says that “*Development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment.*”
- 4.12. **Core Policy 61: Transport and Development** - seeks development to be located and designed to reduce the need to travel particularly by private car and to encourage the use of sustainable transport alternatives.
- 4.13. **Core Policy 62: Development Impacts on the Transport Network** - states “*Developments should provide appropriate mitigating measures to offset any adverse impacts on the transport network at both the construction and operational stages. Proposals for new development should not be accessed directly from the national primary route network outside built-up areas, unless an over-riding need can be demonstrated.*”

West Wiltshire District Plan, Saved Policy C3,

- 4.14. **Policy C3: Special Landscape Areas** - identifies ‘special landscape areas’, including The Corsley Heath to Chapmanslade Greensand Ridge. The policy says the landscape character of the SLAs “*will be conserved and enhanced*” by resisting development that is considered detrimental to the “*high quality*” of the landscape. The policy supports, in principle, development “*essential to the social and economic well-being of the rural community or desirable for the enjoyment of its amenities*”.
- 4.15. The accompanying West Wiltshire District Plan policies map, defines the extent of the special landscape areas referred by Policy C3, and shows that the SLA allocation only applies to part of the application site.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.16. A key tenet of national planning policy is to support the building of a strong and competitive economy. Paragraph 85 of the NPPF is unambiguous that *“Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt”* and that *“Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.”*
- 4.17. Additionally, Paragraph 87 makes clear that planning policies and decisions should recognise and address specific locational requirements of different sectors.
- 4.18. Supporting a prosperous rural economy is also a key objective of the NPPF. Paragraph 88 states *“Planning policies and decisions should enable:*
- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, new buildings*
 - b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
 - c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and*
 - d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.”*
- 4.19. In addition, paragraph 89 confirms *“Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.”*
- 4.20. Paragraph 207 of the NPPF expects local planning authorities, in the determination of applications, to require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. And that the level of detail should be *“proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance”*.
- 4.21. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF says that *“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use”*.
- 4.22. It is implicit from the above that the assessment of harm to the significance of a heritage asset must have regard to the existing context of the application site.

5. Main Considerations

- 5.1. In this section we will consider the main issues relevant to the proposed development and set out our position with regard to these. The main issues are:
- The principle of development
 - Landscape, Ecology and Drainage
 - Heritage
 - Amenity
 - Access, Highways and Parking
 - Sustainability

Principle of development

- 5.2. As a tourist operation (holiday accommodation complex) the most relevant policy in relation to principle is Core Policy 39. Further, the NPPF at paragraphs 88 and 89 are also pertinent.
- 5.3. It is clear that Core Policy 39 encourages and supports the expansion of existing tourist facilities providing expansion is appropriate in scale to its location and assists the future viability of the facility. In this instance the proposed works relate solely to the existing site (operating as a holiday accommodation complex in line with planning permission PL/2024/09973) and does not extend the use or facility beyond the existing site boundaries.
- 5.4. The proposed built form - principally the service/storage building, extended car park and padel courts – are contained to discrete areas of the overall site, well screened by existing and proposed landscaping and planting, and at locations where similar previously proposed development has been approved.
- 5.5. The remaining works are landscape-led features, providing an integrated landscape, planting and drainage package of works to provide landscape, drainage and ecology benefits, all of which will concurrently support the attraction of – and thereby the future success of – the site as a tourist /holiday accommodation destination.
- 5.6. There is no additional accommodation proposed and thus no proposed increase in scale in terms of the potential number of guests accommodated at the site. Whilst there will be further job creation on-site, this is not expected to lead to a direct increase in the overall scale of the operation, but rather be a result of a more effective and consistent operational use of the current holiday accommodation complex resulting from a more consistent pattern of bookings, reflecting and in response to, the enhanced attraction of the site.
- 5.7. Accordingly, the enhanced facilities and uses are designed to support the continuing and longer-term viability of the site going forward. As demonstrated within the submitted Economic Case, the applicant has already invested some £10 million in the site and the further works and site enhancement now proposed will equate to another £5 million investment.

- 5.8. This level of investment will support a greater positive economic impact, securing and enhancing the attraction and viability of the site and benefiting the local economy within the wider area with a forecasted projected turnover of some £6 million per year at 2027 and with a further £10 million of visitor off-site expenditure.
- 5.9. With this being the case, the proposals are acceptable in scale to the site's location and will help to ensure the businesses' viability going forward, all in line with Core Policy 39.
- 5.10. Paragraph 88 of the NPPF clearly supports sustainable rural tourism which respects the character of the countryside. Additionally, the Council's response to the applicant's request for pre-application advice recognises the expectation of national policy for sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments to be supported where developments respect the character of the countryside.
- 5.11. As set out previously, this proposal has been landscape and ecology led, having clear regard to the site's location within the countryside and its associated character, whilst delivering significant environmental improvements. Detailed consideration of the landscape character of the site, how the proposals are informed by that character and the impact of the proposals on that character are provided by the accompanying Landscape Strategy.
- 5.12. The Council's pre-application advice, whilst acknowledging that the proposal "*would represent an encroachment of development and recreation/tourism land use into the open countryside*" also acknowledges that the principle components of that encroachment – essentially the planting and soft landscaping – "*does not necessarily constitute development*", and so could be actioned and implemented without recourse to a planning permission.
- 5.13. It is also the case, of course, that there is no inherent requirement or controls on the site requiring it to be in active agricultural use, and it follows therefore, that the 'agricultural setting' contribution to the appreciation of the listed Hesdin Hall (Thoulstone Farmhouse) emphasised by the Council at pre-application stage, is not and cannot be assured.
- 5.14. Further, the Council have granted permission for holiday accommodation use for the entire build form on the site. Those permissions represent a fundamental change to the character of the site relative to its previous use, and reinforce the above position that the site is not in, nor will feasibly ever be in, agricultural use going forward.
- 5.15. The Council's pre-application advice also acknowledges that, excluding the built elements then proposed (ie: marque, potting shed and the then proposed service/storage building) "*the impact of change in character resulting from planting, landscaping and recreational use would be less likely to be considered visually harmful to the landscape*".
- 5.16. Consideration has also been given to the neighbouring listed building and the proposal is informed by a specific Historic Environment Assessment that examines the potential effects of the proposal on nearby heritage assets and landscape character in the correct context (see further below).
- 5.17. Overall therefore, the proposal represents sustainable rural tourism development, which has due regard and respect for the character of the countryside and historic nature of the site, and all of which is supported by local and national policy.

- 5.18. The development therefore demonstrably meets the expectations of both local and national policy (Core Strategy Policy 39 and NPPF paragraphs 88 and 89) and the principle of development in this instance is fully supported.

Landscape, Ecology and Drainage

- 5.19. As referred above, the proposal is purposefully landscape and ecology led, with sustainable drainage principles and application forming an integral part of the landscape and ecology objectives, and therefore the overall layout and design approach taken.
- 5.20. Given the integrated nature of the landscape, ecology and drainage elements of the proposal, and their role as the fundamental objective of the application proposal, it is not appropriate to consider the elements separately.

Landscape

- 5.21. Landscape considerations relate to the provision of on-site landscaping enhancement and features, as well as the impact the proposal will have on the wider landscape setting of the site.
- 5.22. The landscaping components of the proposal include extensive new tree planting, including the re-provision of an orchard and extensive woodland belts and copses around the site boundary, plus a freshwater swimming pool set within the site, which will be additional to the enhancement of an existing pond and site drainage features.
- 5.23. These elements have all be carefully considered and co-ordinated in line with the ecology and drainage considerations for the site.
- 5.24. The submitted Landscape Strategy (prepared by Greenhalgh Landscape Architecture) examines the landscape context, including baseline landscape and visual conditions of the site and its wider setting, as well as constraints and opportunities afforded by the site. The Landscape Strategy sets out how the proposal appropriately responds to the landscape character, providing enhanced visual integrity and environmental quality to the local landscape alongside increasing ecological value and softening existing views of the site from local receptors.
- 5.25. With reference to the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment, the Landscape Strategy concludes that:

“the proposal proposed development presents an opportunity to restore and enhance landscape features that have been lost or degraded over time through the reinstatement of traditional orchard planting, the establishment of new areas of native woodland, and the creation of native hedgerow boundaries. Collectively, these measures would strengthen the visual character and environmental quality of the local landscape, whilst increasing its ecological value in accordance with the strategic objectives of the Landscape Character Area (LCA).

Furthermore, the introduction of additional tree planting would establish a robust landscape framework to better integrate the farmstead within its wider setting. This planting would help to soften views of the buildings from nearby Public Rights of Way

(PRoW), provide a greater sense of enclosure, and ensure that the proposed leisure uses are sensitively assimilated into the surrounding landscape character.”

Ecology

- 5.26. The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, which identifies existing ecological constraints of the site and confirms the significant biodiversity gains that will be delivered by the proposal.
- 5.27. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and BNG Feasibility Assessment (prepared by Beamsley Ecology) identifies the site to be of limited ecological value currently, with species-poor modified grassland dominating the site and providing limited value to bats, birds and other fauna.
- 5.28. Accordingly, the proposal presents “*significant opportunities to enhance biodiversity*” including by:
- Strengthening and diversification of grassland and hedgerow habitats
 - Improving connectivity to new and retained woodland across the site
 - Introducing new planting and nesting, roosting and sheltering opportunities for wildlife
 - Creation of more structurally diverse planting to improve insect abundance and foraging opportunities
 - Introduction of new ecological features such as ponds, and enhancement/establishment of aquatic and damp habitats supporting invertebrate prey
- 5.29. The accompanying Biodiversity Net Gain assessment is based on the baseline habitats identified via the PEA and the Landscape Masterplan as proposed.
- 5.30. The BNG Assessment indicates significant Biodiversity Net Gain will be delivered by the proposal. For all three BNG habitat types (area habitats, linear features, watercourse) the BNG assessment identifies gains substantially exceeding the statutory 10% BNG requirement.
- 5.31. The expected gains, by habitat type are:
- Area Habitats 54.02%
 - Linear features 86.26%
 - Watercourses 132.27%
- 5.32. This BNG, which more than meets the expectations of Policy 50 (in addition to clearly surpassing the 10% statutory requirement), will be delivered on-site, as an integral component of the development proposal and represents a significant and material benefit to be delivered by the scheme and one that should carry considerable weight in the planning balance.

Drainage

- 5.33. The accompanying “*Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy*” (prepared by K-Ten Consulting), provides an assessment of the risk of flooding at the site and a surface water drainage strategy to appropriately manage surface water run-off and reduce flood risk at the site.

- 5.34. The evidence presented by the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, confirms that the site is within Flood Zone 1 with less than 0.1% annual probability of flooding from rivers or sea. The FRA also examines the site's risk of flooding from other sources, including surface water, and groundwater.
- 5.35. The sustainable surface water drainage strategy for the site includes SUDs provision, meets policy expectations and is designed to ensure that surface water arising from the site is managed in a sustainable manner and mimic the existing condition of surface water flows from the site, while overall reducing flood risk to the site itself and elsewhere.
- 5.36. The drainage strategy includes utilising an existing watercourse that runs through the site which discharges to the pond located towards the southern end of the site, with the addition of new additional SUDs swales and attenuation pools. The watercourse, swales and pools thereby providing drainage and SUDs benefit in addition to visual, landscape and biodiversity benefits.
- 5.37. The accompanying FRA confirms that permeable paving will be utilised within the site, including the proposed new parking area.
- 5.38. The proposal is not expected to materially affect the site's existing foul water drainage infrastructure or capacity, and hence there is no change to foul water drainage at the site associated with this proposal.

Heritage

- 5.39. Hesdin Hall (Thoulstone Farmhouse), situated on-site, is a Grade II Listed Building (List Entry 1036524). Whilst none of the proposed works proposed relate to the listed building or other principal buildings on the site, a Heritage Environment Assessment (HEA) has been prepared in respect of the proposal, which considers the archaeological potential of the site and the potential effects of the proposal on the listed building and its setting.
- 5.40. The accompanying HEA (prepared by AH Heritage Planning) considers the potential effects of the proposal on nearby heritage assets including the Grade II listed Thoulstone Farmhouse (now called 'Hesdin Hall') and the separate Grade II listed Spinney Farmhouse which is located on the far side of Bath Road to the north east of the site. The HEA also considers potential implications for buried archaeology and the wider historic landscape character.
- 5.41. The assessment concludes that the proposal will preserve the significance and settings of both listed buildings. Hesdin Hall will remain the principal historic focus of the estate and its relationship with the surrounding rural landscape will continue to be readily understood. Spinney Farmhouse will remain physically and visually separate from the development and will experience no adverse effects.
- 5.42. In respect of setting, the HEA finds that the setting of "*Hesdin Manor comprises both its immediate historic farmstead context and the wider rural landscape within which it is experienced*" and that whilst the setting was previously agricultural in character, the estate has since "*undergone a gradual transition toward leisure and hospitality uses, including the conversion of historic buildings and construction of modern accommodation and ancillary facilities*". That 'evolution' is found to have altered the historic agricultural character of parts of the estate, but has not "*fundamentally eroded the ability to understand Hesdin Manor as the historic focus of the former farmstead*", and that the listed

building *“remains experienced as the architectural and historic focus of a secluded rural property set within a landscape of mature trees, hedgerows, paddocks and open countryside”*.

- 5.43. Section 6 of the HEA, provides the assessment of the potential effects on heritage assets. In respect of the setting of Thoulstone Farmhouse, the HEA finds that Hesdin Hall *“will continue to be experienced as the historic focus of the Site and its relationship with the surviving farmstead buildings, mature planting and surrounding countryside will remain entirely appreciable”*, and that the landscape enhancement, re-instated orchard, woodland planting, hedgerows and habitat creation to be delivered by the proposal will *“strengthen the rural character of the estate and reinforce the landscape framework within which Hesdin Manor is experienced”*.
- 5.44. Overall the proposals are considered to preserve the setting and significance of Hesdin Hall, have a neutral to minor beneficial effect and result in no harm to the significance of the listed building.
- 5.45. In respect of the historic landscape character, again the HEA finds the incorporation of elements including *“orchard reinstatement, woodland planting, meadow creation, hedgerow reinforcement, habitat creation and sustainable drainage features”* all contribute positively to the rural character of the Site, and that the *“historic relationship between the former farmstead and the surrounding countryside will remain extant and appreciable”* and *“Historic field patterns, mature vegetation and the overall rural character of the landscape will continue to be understood and experienced”*.
- 5.46. The HEA concludes that the proposed development is heritage-sensitive and compatible with the historic character of the site, and that the proposal will *“preserve the experience of Hesdin Manor as the architectural focus of a secluded rural estate”* and will *“reinforce the legibility of the estate as a coherent historic farm and modern leisure complex”*.
- 5.47. Overall, HEA concludes that the development proposal is landscape-led, heritage-sensitive and will preserve the significance and settings of the designated heritage assets, maintain the legibility of the historic landscape and provide opportunities for landscape enhancement.
- 5.48. The HEA concludes that the overall effect on the historic environment is assessed as *“neutral to minor beneficial and the proposals accord with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and Historic England guidance”*.
- 5.49. The Council's pre-application advice in relation to the potential impact on heritage assets associated with the proposal, draws on previous heritage evidence submitted for previous proposals at the site (in 2019) and a Planning Inspector's conclusions in relation to a 2021 application for erection of two residential dwellings and garage and the demolition of existing agricultural buildings, within the Hesdin site. The pre-application advice also expressed concern relating to specific elements of the (then) proposal, including the provision of formal paths within the proposed orchard, and the (then) proposed greenhouse building.
- 5.50. The Council will be aware that notwithstanding the determination of those 2019 and 2021 proposals, other development at the site has been previously approved (and has / is currently being implemented) including the erection of three residential dwellings (PL/2021/06497, granted on 30th September 2021) for a development much similar to the 2021 proposal refused at appeal. The officer's delegated report in that instance found that the *“proposal would preserve, if not enhance the setting of the listed building to its benefit”* and that no harm would be caused to the landscape.

- 5.51. The site planning history (See section 1 above) also includes permission granted by the Council in 2023 for the *“erection of new tennis courts and extension of existing car park”*. The Council’s determination of that application included consideration of the proposal’s potential impact upon the setting of the listed building (Hesdin Hall), including its setting. The Council’s delegated report in that case concluded *“The proposed tennis court would be approximately 50m from the listed building, with the car park intervening. Due to the distance and the existing and proposed vegetation it is considered that the setting of the listed building would not be affected”*.
- 5.52. As we have also referred above (see paragraph 3.5), the scope of the proposal has been revised following the pre-application engagement with the Council, and previously proposed built elements (the greenhouse/potting shed’, marque, orchard pedestrian paths) are not now proposed.

Amenity

- 5.53. The site is not within close proximity to any residential dwellings such that there is any likelihood of impact to residential amenity from noise, loss of privacy or any other amenity issue. However, the proposal will help to improve local amenity by enhancing and improving the existing fragmented boundary vegetation and providing additional screening that will help to minimise visual intrusion and noise impact associated with the A36. Further, this screening will help to keep the site “contained” without leading to any harmful visual effect or intrusion in the wider landscape.

Access, Highways & Parking

- 5.54. As outlined within the submission, the proposal seeks to alter and extend an existing car park in the northeast corner of the site. This is principally to cater for forecast additional staff engaged in the on-going management, service and maintenance of the estate and its operation. There are no proposed changes to the existing access arrangements for the site and indeed no actual increase in the number of guests that can stay on site (currently 110 but increasing to 140 on completion of the three new units permitted by PL/2021/06497).
- 5.55. The Council’s pre-application response (see section 3 above) includes confirmation from the local highway authority (Wiltshire Council Highways) that the proposal was unlikely to generate an increased level of traffic; would be unlikely to attract a highway objection, and that the purpose of the proposed car park should be clarified by any subsequent planning application submission.
- 5.56. On the basis of the above, there are no significant highway implications arising from the proposal, and no specific transport assessment accompanies the planning application submission.

Sustainability

- 5.57. The proposal will deliver positive environmental, economic and social gains, and represents sustainable development in the context of national and local planning policy.
- 5.58. In environmental terms, the proposal is, fundamentally, landscape and ecology led incorporating significant new planting, sustainable drainage measures and habitat creation. The proposed extensive new planting will significantly enhance site boundaries (reducing fragmentation) and the overall

composition of the landscaping within the site. Other natural features are enhanced by the integration of SUDs infrastructure, including the utilisation of a (re-established) existing pond for attenuation purposes. Dedicated ecology areas and biodiversity enhancements are to be incorporated, which collectively, as part of the overall landscape enhancement, will deliver substantial biodiversity net gain which far exceeds the statutory 10% BNG requirement.

- 5.59. The economic benefits of the proposal are derived from the increased attraction of the site within its market, and the opportunity of the site to accommodate a wider customer offer. The submitted 'Economic Case' document, outlines how the proposal will assist the growth of turnover and associated visitor spend, and the associated contribution of the site to the local economy and local employment. This includes a direct £15 million cumulative capital investment into the rural economy.
- 5.60. The Estate is expected to generate an estimated £16 million total annual visitor spending, close to two-thirds of which (£10m) is forecast to be off-site expenditure. In employment terms, the site is expected to support approximately 100 staff (full & part-time), as part of a total employment opportunity of around 350 FTE within the local economy.
- 5.61. These economic benefits, derived from the continuing and enhanced attraction, use and operation of the site are fully supported by national policy - such as NPPF paragraph 85 which requires that *"Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity"* - and should be afforded significant weight in favour of the proposal.
- 5.62. The social gains associated with the proposal, in addition to the social benefits directly derived from the significant economic benefits outline above, include the 'communal value' of the continuing active use of the listed building and its setting and the associated continuing opportunity for the site to be publicly appreciated and experienced.
- 5.63. Additionally, social gain will be derived from the substantial biodiversity gains delivered by the proposal.
- 5.64. Overall therefore the proposal will deliver and support significant environmental, economic and social gains, consistent with and, for the most part, far exceeding the expectations of national and local planning policy.
- 5.65. The proposal, therefore, demonstrably constitutes sustainable development.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Squires Planning in support of a planning application by Hesdin Estate for the:
- “Enhancement of holiday accommodation complex use with additional recreational and operational facilities and uses”*
- 6.2. The site has an extensive and complicated planning history.
- 6.3. Of particular relevance is planning permission PL/2024/09973, granted by Wiltshire Council on 16th May 2025. The permission grants the flexible use of the site for C3 dwellinghouses and as a holiday accommodation complex (Sui Generis) in line with the provisions of Schedule 2, Part 3, Class V of the GPDO.
- 6.4. The site is currently operating under the holiday accommodation use (see <https://hesdin.co.uk/>). It is the intention of the applicant to enhance this use and ultimately maintain it as the permanent use of the site. The current operation provides luxury holiday homes with space for up to 140 guests.
- 6.5. The proposed development comprises the enhancement of the existing holiday accommodation complex by way of the provision of additional landscaping, and recreational and operational facilities. The proposal includes: formal use of the site as identified as part of the holiday accommodation complex; significantly enhanced landscaping including extensive new planting; leisure facilities (padel courts), additional car parking and the provision of a new building to provide appropriate storage and servicing facilities for the continuing upkeep and management of the estate.
- 6.6. Key components of the proposal include:
- A replanted and reinstated orchard area in the northwest corner of the site
 - New woodland belts and copses, and other boundary planting, reinstating historical boundaries and improving ecological connections around the site boundary.
 - Significant new planting within the site including new trees and wildlife meadow.
 - Introduction of SUDs swales and attenuation ponds, and opening-up of an existing culverted ditch.
 - A new natural swimming pond (circa 20m x 25m).
 - A circular footpath within the site providing pedestrian access through the enhanced landscape.
 - Several fenced livestock areas
 - The remodelling and extension of the existing eastern car park
 - Provision of Padel courts (in the approximate location of previously approved Tennis Courts)
 - A store and services building close to the western edge of the site, screened by boundary planting and the proposed orchard.

- 6.7. The proposed built form - principally the service/storage building, extended car park and padel courts – are contained to discrete areas of the overall site, well screened by existing and proposed landscaping and planting, and at locations where similar previously proposed development has been approved.
- 6.8. The remaining works are landscape-led features, providing an integrated landscape, planting and drainage package of works to provide landscape, drainage and ecology benefits, all of which will concurrently support the attraction of – and thereby the future success of – the site as a tourist /holiday accommodation destination.
- 6.9. Collectively, the integrated landscaping, ecology and SUDs enhancements will provide a coherent feel and appearance to the site, whilst also having the benefits of offering screening and delivering significant biodiversity net gain, as well as improving the economic vitality of the site and its contribution to the local economy.
- 6.10. The proposal is informed by heritage considerations, including consideration of the potential impact of the proposal on Hesdin Hall (Thoulstone Farmhouse) and its setting. The accompanying Historic Environment Assessment, provides detailed examination, assessment and consideration of the heritage aspects of relevance to the proposal.
- 6.11. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF (as referred above) says that *“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use”*. Whilst the conclusions of the HEA indicate the proposal will result in no harm to the significance of the heritage asset or its setting, the public benefits associated with the development would, in any event, justify approval of the proposal.
- 6.12. The public benefits associated with the development include:
- Significant economic investment, attracting estimated £16m annual visitor spend much of which is expected off-site in the local and regional economy.
 - Provision of new employment with a total around 350 FTE employment opportunity to be supported by the site.
 - Restoration and enhancement of landscape features that have been lost or degraded over time through the reinstatement of traditional orchard planting, the establishment of new areas of native woodland, and the creation of native hedgerow boundaries
 - Strengthening of the visual character and environmental quality of the local landscape
 - Significant and extensive Biodiversity Net Gain (across all three BNG habitat types) substantially exceeding the statutory 10% BNG requirements.
 - SUDs provision, providing sustainable management of surface water flows and reducing flood risk to the site and elsewhere.
 - A more secure and viable continuing active use of the listed building and its setting, and the associated continuing opportunity for the site to be publicly appreciated and experienced.

6.13. The proposal complies with applicable local policy, including

- Core Policy 39: Tourist Development
- Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Core Policy 51: Landscape, and
- Core Policy 58: Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment

and it is supported by the expectations of national policy, including NPPF paragraphs 85, 88 and 89 which support, and give weight to, economic development and the rural economy.

6.14. Overall the proposal demonstrably constitutes sustainable development and will deliver and support significant environmental, economic and social gains, consistent with and, for the most part, far exceeding, the expectations of national and local n planning policy.

6.15. As set out above and as demonstrated in the supporting documents, the proposal complies with applicable local policy and national policy objectives set out in the NPPF, will deliver a significant package of public benefits and there are no unacceptable impacts associated with the proposal.

6.16. We conclude therefore that there is an overwhelming justification for planning permission to be granted.



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