

APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION

DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/02359
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	1 PYE CORNER, DEVIZES ROAD, BOX, CORSHAM, SN13 8ED
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Conversion of outbuilding into dwelling
RECOMMENDATION:	That Planning Permission be REFUSED

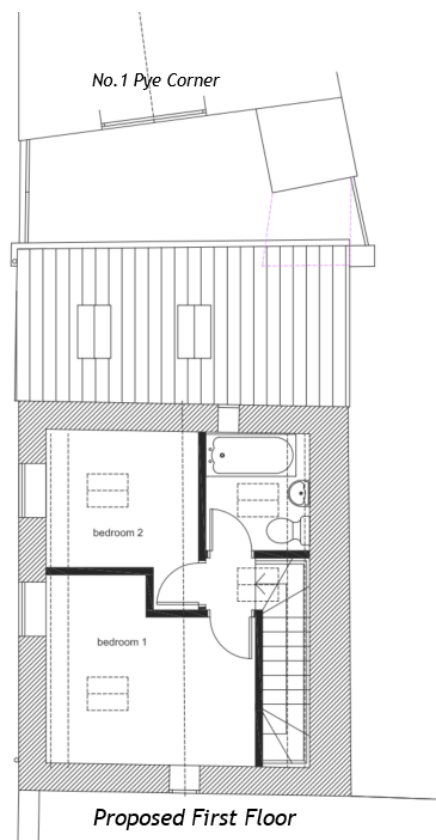
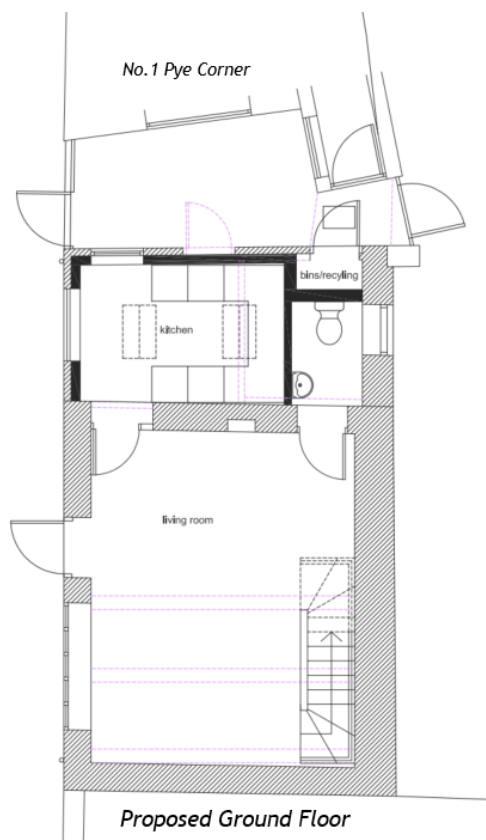
PROPOSAL

The application seeks full planning permission for the conversion of a former blacksmith's outbuilding to a single residential dwelling (Use Class C3) at Blacksmiths Cottage, Pye Corner, Box.

The building is a two-storey structure with a single-storey lean-to extension, positioned to the rear of the terrace at Pye Corner and accessed via an existing byway (Public Right of Way BOX97).

The proposed development would provide a two-bedroom dwelling, with a living room in the main part of the outbuilding and containing the main entrance door from the byway, and a kitchen, WC and bin store formed within the existing lean-to extension. At first floor there would be two bedrooms and a bathroom.

Below: Extract of Submitted Floor Plans- The case officer has added the annotation to identify No.1 Pye Corner:



The ground floor internal area would be approximately 42 sq m and the first floor about 27 sq m (total c69sq m).

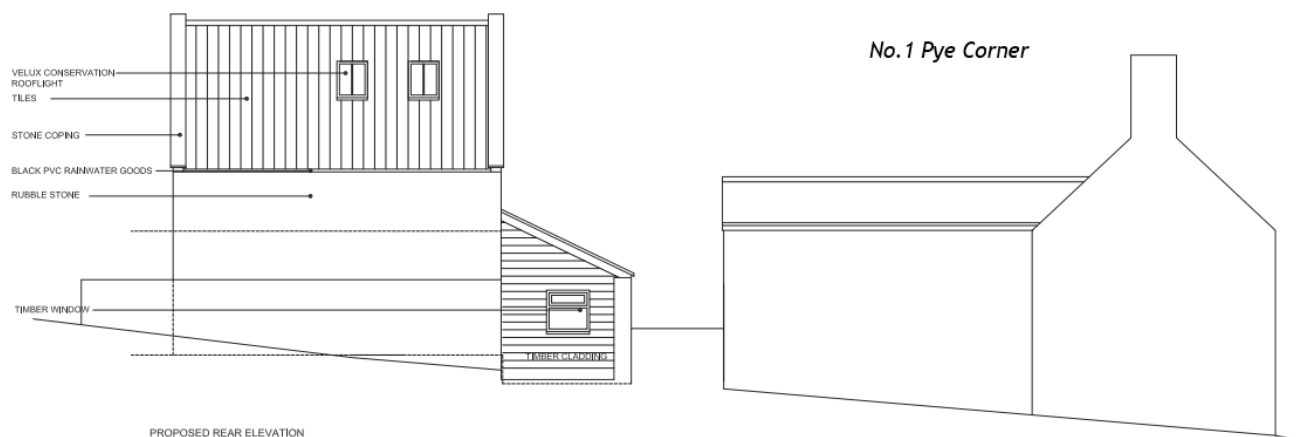
The proposal involves external alterations to facilitate the conversion, including:

- enlargement of existing window openings and insertion of a new window at first floor level on the west elevation, facing the byway;
- installation of conservation-style rooflights within the main roof (two on the west and two on the east elevations) and lean-to extension (two on the north elevation);
- replacement of existing doors and windows with timber units; and
- application of horizontal timber cladding to the lean-to extension.

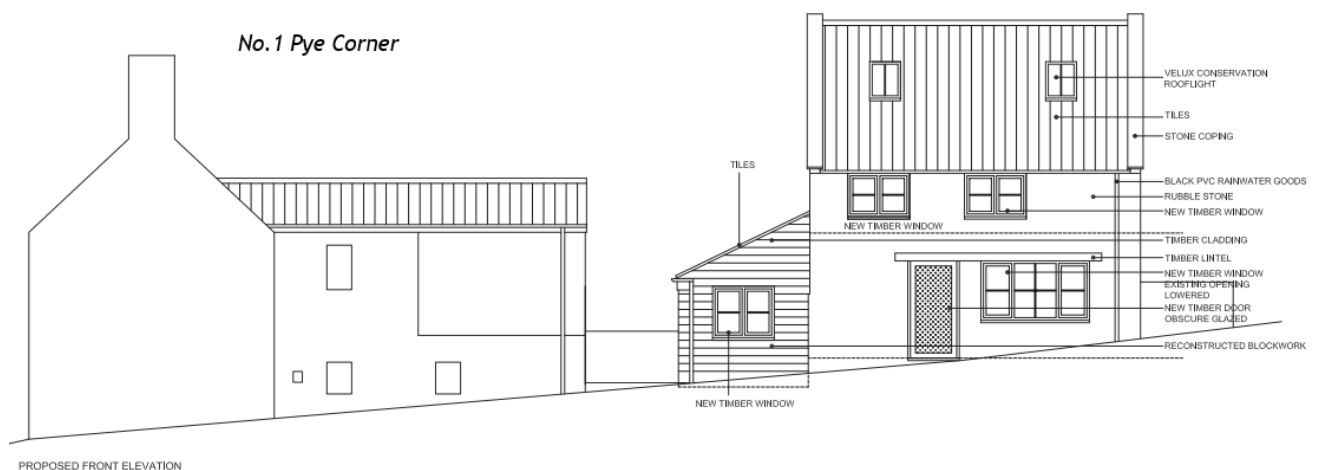
The building would be retained substantially as existing in terms of footprint, scale and massing, with no extensions proposed beyond the existing form.

Below are extracts of the proposed elevation drawings. The case officer has added the annotation to identify No.1 Pye Corner:

Below: Proposed rear (east) elevation:

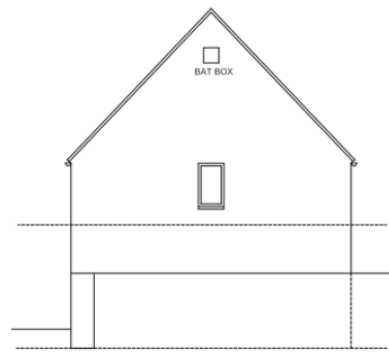
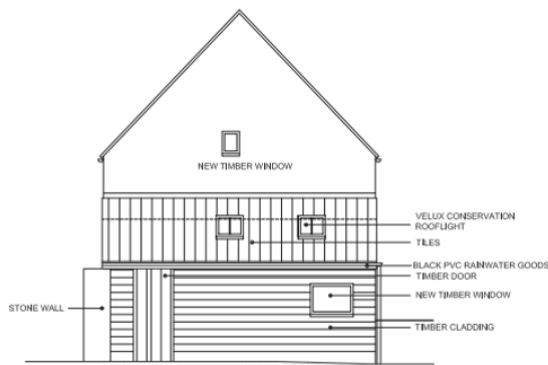


Below: Proposed front (west) elevation:



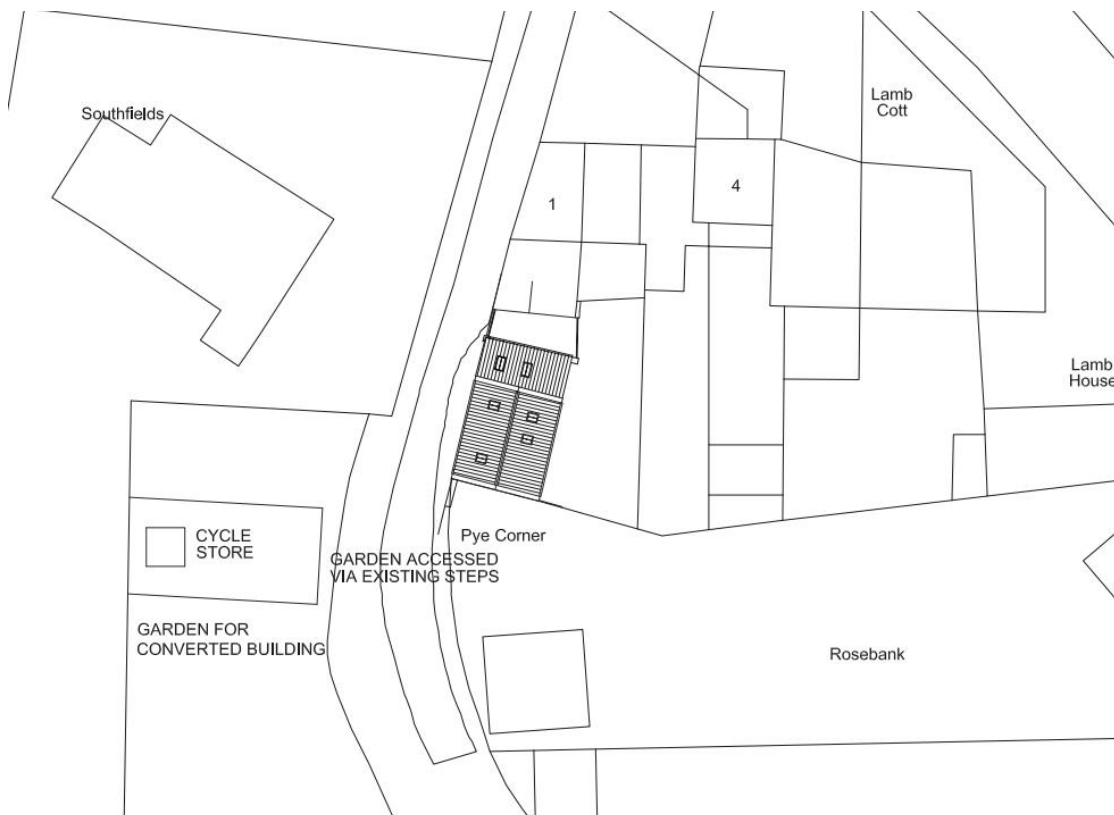
Below: Proposed side (north) elevation:

Below: Proposed side (south) elevation:



The proposed dwelling would not benefit from on-site vehicle parking. The submitted Heritage and Planning Statement suggests parking can be accommodated on Devizes Road which has unrestricted parking near the access to the byway. The Heritage and Planning Statement considers reliance on a car would be minimal due to the services provided within Box, and the nearby bus stops providing services to Chippenham, Melksham and Bath. Pedestrian access would be retained via the existing byway.

Private amenity space for the dwelling would be provided on a separate parcel of land located on the opposite side of the byway, within an existing garden area previously associated with the neighbouring property. An extract of the submitted site plan is below:



Ancillary works include provision of a cycle store within the garden area and a bin storage arrangement, with waste collection to occur from Devizes Road in a manner consistent with neighbouring properties.

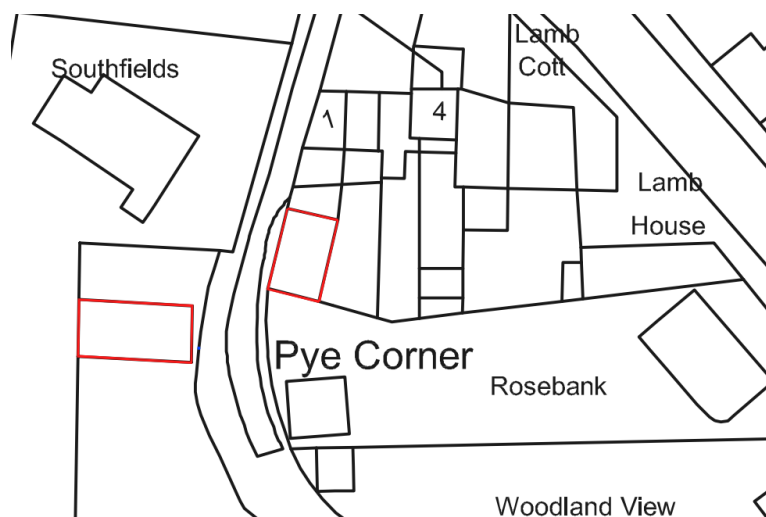
The application is accompanied by a Bat Scoping Survey, which assesses the building and site as having negligible potential to support bat roosts, and confirms that no significant ecological impacts are anticipated.

The proposal represents a re-submission of a previously refused application (PL/2025/05989), with broadly similar form and layout. This application differs in that the windows on the west elevation have been made larger than previously proposed; the entrance door is proposed to be obscure glazed rather than solid timber; and, internally, a glazed panel would be provided within the living room of the ceiling, to allow light from the rooflights above the stairwell into the living room.

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The application relates to an outbuilding located to the rear (south) of No.1 Pye Corner, within the village of Box, which is identified as a large village within the Corsham Community Area. The site lies within the defined settlement boundary.

Below: Extract of submitted location plan with proposed dwelling and garden outlined in red:



Below: Latest aerial imagery – proposed dwelling indicated by red flag:



The outbuilding is positioned to the rear of the terrace at Pye Corner and is accessed via an existing byway (Public Right of Way BOX97), which connects to Devizes Road. A small, paved area between the outbuilding and No.1 Pye Corner provides access to the rear gardens of Nos.1-3 Pye Corner.

The following photographs were taken during a site visit in November 2025:

Below: North (side, facing No.1 Pye Corner) and West (front) elevations, and byway:



Below: Garden area opposite the site & across byway



Below: South elevation and view down byway



The building comprises a two-storey structure constructed of coursed rubble stone under a pitched tiled roof, with stone parapets to the gable ends. A single-storey lean-to extension is attached to the building. The Heritage and Planning Statement submitted with the previous application on this site advised that the lean to was, at that time used as a bathroom for No.1, linked to No.1 by a rear porch and flat roof that abuts both the porch and single storey extension.

The photographs below were submitted with the previous application and show the interior of the lean to extension (used as a bathroom to No.1 Pye Corner) and the “covered link” between No.1 and the application site:

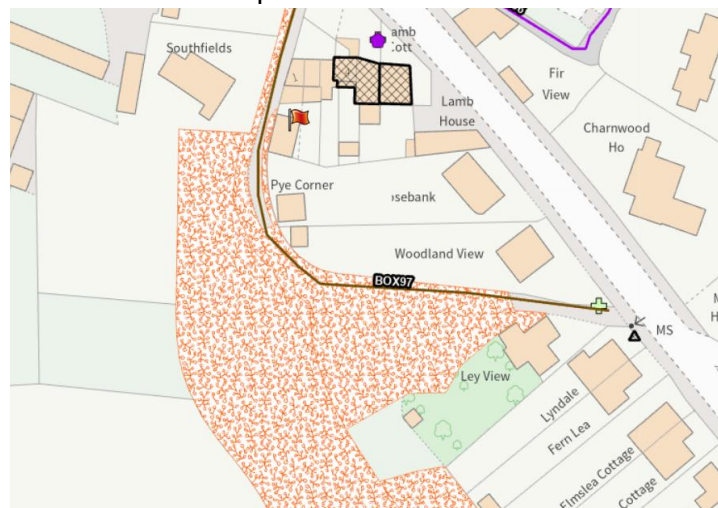


The internal structure of the main part of the outbuilding includes a solid ground floor with a partial first floor, with exposed roof timbers.

The site has a varied relationship with surrounding land and buildings. Garden areas associated with neighbouring properties are located on the opposite side of the byway, including the land identified to serve as private amenity space for the proposed dwelling. Land to the south of the dwelling is higher.

The site is subject to the following constraints:

- Box Conservation Area
- Green Belt
- Cotswolds National Landscape
- Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC) - The site is within multiple core roost buffer zones associated with the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC), with Box Mine Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located approximately 600m north-east.
- NE Priority Habitats – Deciduous Woodland and Traditional Orchard –indicated by the orange pattern on the plan below.
- The site has been identified by the Environment Agency (EA) as being in flood zone 1 (in an area at the lowest risk of flooding from rivers and seas) and the Councils strategic flood risk assessment as not being at high risk of ground or surface water flooding.
- Listed Buildings to the northeast – hatched in black on the plan below.
- PRoW – Byway Box97 which connects to the Classified A Road “Devizes Road” and is indicated by the brown line on the plan below:



RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/2025/05989 1 PYE CORNER, DEVIZES ROAD, BOX, CORSHAM, SN13 8ED Conversion of outbuilding into dwelling. Refused for the following reasons:

1. Substandard living conditions for future occupants

The proposed dwelling would provide restricted outlook and limited private amenity space. The constrained nature of the plot, combined with limited daylight and lack of adequate external space, results in substandard living conditions for future occupants. This conflicts with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Section 12 of the NPPF, which require new development to provide good-quality internal and external living environments.

2. Character and pattern of development

The creation of a separate dwelling and subdivision of an existing garden results in a form of development that is incongruous with the established pattern and character of the area.

While the existing building is traditional and the lane informal, the introduction of a second independent household on the plot, with separate domestic activity and limited private amenity space, produces a contrived form of backland development. This arrangement is not consistent with the historic pattern or intended function of the plot, and is harmful to the visual and functional character of development along this lane. The proposal therefore conflicts with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Section 12 of the NPPF, which seek well-designed places that respect local character.

3. Ecology

The proposal involves subdivision of a garden and conversion of an outbuilding in an area potentially supporting protected species. The application does not provide sufficient ecological information to demonstrate that protected species or habitats would not be harmed, nor likely significant effects on the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC. In the absence of this, the proposal conflicts with the wildlife protection requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and Wiltshire Core Strategy policy CP50.

4. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

The development fails to demonstrate a measurable biodiversity net gain in accordance with Wiltshire Core Strategy and national guidance. The absence of any proposed ecological enhancements or mitigation means the proposal is contrary to the habitat improvement and protection requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy CP50.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require that the determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Development Plan

The development plan for Wiltshire comprises the *Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)* (adopted January 2015) and any made neighbourhood plans, which remains the principal statutory planning document guiding development across the county. Though the development plan is considered as a whole, those parts deemed to be particularly relevant to this application are listed below:

The adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS), with particular regard to:

- Core Policy 1 Settlement Strategy;
- Core Policy 2 Delivery Strategy;
- Core Policy 11 Spatial Strategy for the Corsham Community Area
- Core Policy 41 Sustainable Construction and Low-Carbon Energy;
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Core Policy 51 Landscape
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 58 Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment;
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development;
- Core Policy 64 Demand Management

Saved Policies of the North Wiltshire Local Plan (NWLP)

- NE14: Trees, Site Features and the Control of Development

Supplementary Planning Documents and other Guidance:

Wiltshire Design Guide

Wiltshire Local Transport Plan including the Car Parking Strategy and Cycling Strategy

Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan (CNLMP)

There is no made Box Neighbourhood Plan at the time of writing.

National Planning Policy & Guidance:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- National Design Guide
- Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Box Parish Council: No objection.

“Box Parish Council has no objections.”

Council Highway Engineer: No objection subject to conditions.

The Council's Highway Engineer has raised no objection to the proposed development, subject to conditions and informatives. They have noted that the proposal would result in the conversion of the existing outbuilding to a single two-bedroom dwelling. In accordance with Wiltshire's parking standards, the development would ordinarily be expected to provide two off-street parking spaces; however, the scheme is proposed as a car-free development.

In assessing the proposal, the Highway Engineer has taken into account the site's location within the settlement boundary of Box and its accessibility to alternative modes of transport. The site is located within approximately 200 metres of bus stops on Devizes Road and Bath Road, which provide regular services to nearby settlements including Bath, Chippenham and Devizes, operating throughout the day. On this basis, the site is considered to have good accessibility to sustainable transport options.

While it is noted that on-street parking demand on Devizes Road is relatively high, it is considered that the potential displacement of up to two vehicles associated with the proposal would not give rise to significant highway safety concerns. As such, a highways objection is not warranted.

The Highway Engineer has recommended that informatives be attached to any permission to ensure that the public right of way (BOX97) remains unobstructed and available for public use during construction, including requirements for consultation with the Council's Rights of Way Officer in respect of any construction access arrangements.

Rights of Way: No objection subject to informatives.

The Council's Public Rights of Way Officer raises no objection to the proposal, subject to informatives. It is noted that the site is accessed via the byway open to all traffic (BOX97). Given that the proposal does not include on-site parking and is intended to operate as a car-free development, it is considered that the completed development would not give rise to any adverse impact on the use of the byway.

The Public Rights of Way Officer has recommended that informatives be attached to any permission to ensure that the route remains unobstructed and available for public use during construction. This includes requirements for prior consultation in the event that a temporary closure is required, together with measures to prevent obstruction or damage to the surface of the byway during the course of development works.

Council Ecologist: No objection subject to conditions

The Council's Ecologist raises no objection subject to conditions, and confirms that the application has been subject to a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA).

The submitted Bat Scoping Survey and Nesting Bird Report identifies the building as having negligible potential to support roosting bats, although the wider site offers suitability for foraging and commuting bats.

Given the site's location within a consultation zone associated with the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a test of likely significance has been undertaken. This concludes that, having regard to the scale and nature of the development, there is no mechanism for adverse effect on the SAC, and the proposal is screened out of Appropriate Assessment.

The Ecologist advises that, subject to the retention of boundary features and implementation of a sensitive lighting strategy, the functionality of the site for bats would be maintained.

With regard to priority habitat, although mapping identifies woodland and traditional orchard within the red line, the submitted survey confirms that no such priority habitat is present on site, with the garden comprising managed grassland and a single tree.

In relation to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), the Ecologist advises that the development is likely to fall below the de minimis threshold, provided that it does not impact priority habitat and affects only a limited area of habitat. The case officer is advised to satisfy themselves on this point prior to determination.

Notwithstanding the above, the Ecologist confirms that the proposal should incorporate biodiversity enhancements, such as bat and bird boxes, in order to accord with Core Policy 50 and national policy requirements. These measures, together with a lighting strategy and compliance with the submitted ecological information, can be secured by condition.

Conservation Officer: No comments received

REPRESENTATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), the application was publicised by way of neighbour notification letters sent to adjoining and nearby properties and a site notice displayed near the site. Two representations have been received at the time of writing, one representation raises concerns regarding the merits of the proposal, while a second relates to the labelling of plans.

The first representation raises the following concerns:

- The proposal does not address the previous reasons for refusal, particularly in relation to:
 - restricted outlook, lack of daylight, and limited external space;
 - the introduction of a second household resulting in a contrived form of backland development;
 - harm to the character of the area arising from the change of use of a former workshop to a dwelling.
- The relationship between the proposed dwelling and neighbouring land is disputed, including concerns regarding overlooking.
- The status of the proposed garden land is questioned, including its description in the application and its historic use.
- Concern is raised regarding potential impacts on the use of the byway (BOX97), including access restrictions during construction and the existing width of the route.

The second representation advises that the labelling of “Pye Corner” on the submitted Location Plan and Neighbourhood Map is incorrect and misleading.

ASSESSMENT

In accordance with Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

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

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

Principle of development

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

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

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

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

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

The site is within the defined development boundary of Box (Large Village) and so the principal of development is acceptable subject to other material considerations discussed below.

5 Year Housing Land Supply

The Wiltshire Housing Land Supply Statement (June 2025) provides the latest position on the Council's ability to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land, which is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Following the revision of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024), the calculation of Local Housing Need has been updated, and a buffer must be applied to the five- year requirement. This has resulted in a substantial increase in the five-year housing requirement. When assessed against deliverable sites, the recalculation shows a significant shortfall, with the Council currently able to demonstrate only 2.42 years of supply at a unitary authority level. Where there is a shortfall in deliverable housing sites, paragraphs 78 and 11(d) of the NPPF states that the most important policies for determining the application are regarded as being out of date.

However, in this case, the application site is located within the Green Belt, the Cotswolds National Landscape, as well as the consultation zone of the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat Special Area of Conservation. All these areas are regarded as those having particular importance and are listed in footnote 7 to paragraph 11(d). Should the proposed development result in impacts that constitute a strong reason for refusing planning permission, the so-called *tilted balance* of paragraph 11(d) will be disengaged.

Notwithstanding the above, the shortage of housing land remains a material consideration even in the context of a flat balance, and must be weighed alongside other relevant planning considerations, including the special designations of the site.

Green Belt

The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. Development within the Green Belt is generally considered inappropriate unless it falls within specific exceptions set out in paragraph 154 of the NPPF:

Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the following exceptions applies:

- a) *buildings for agriculture and forestry;*
- b) *the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*
- c) *the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;*
- d) *the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;*
- e) *limited infilling in villages;*
- f) *limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and*
- g) *limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.*
- h) *Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict*

with the purposes of including land within it. These are:

- i. mineral extraction;*
- ii. engineering operations;*
- iii. local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;*
- iv. the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;*
- v. material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and*
- vi. development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.*

Paragraph 154 (h) (iv) allows the reuse of buildings provided that they are of permanent and substantial construction. Whilst a structural survey does not form part of the application submission, there is no reason to consider that the building is not of substantial construction.

The proposal involves the reuse of an existing building and the subdivision of the existing garden to serve a new dwelling. From a Green Belt perspective, no extensions are proposed and the subdivision would not materially reduce openness or introduce significant urbanisation; therefore, the development is not considered inappropriate in the Green Belt.

Design and impact on the character and appearance of the area

Policy context

Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires high-quality design that responds positively to local character and the natural, historic and built environment, and integrates effectively with its surroundings.

Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) emphasises the importance of well-designed places which are visually attractive, functionally effective and contribute positively to the quality of the built environment.

The Wiltshire Design Guide SPD and the Building for a Healthy Life Framework further promote context-led design, encouraging development that reflects local distinctiveness, supports coherent settlement patterns, and provides a high standard of living environment.

Assessment

The application site comprises a detached outbuilding located to the rear of No.1 Pye Corner, accessed via a narrow byway and situated within a tightly constrained setting with a close relationship to neighbouring built form and land parcels. The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of traditional dwellings arranged along Pye Corner and adjoining routes, with a generally coherent pattern of development that reflects the historic evolution of the settlement.

The proposal seeks the conversion of this outbuilding to form an independent dwelling, together with the subdivision of land to provide private amenity space.

In terms of the building itself, the proposal is relatively modest. The existing scale and massing would be retained, and the external alterations, including recladding and replacement fenestration, are appropriately restrained and would improve the appearance of a building that is currently in a poor state of repair. The structure is visually contained within the site and does not make a prominent contribution to the wider street scene. Viewed in isolation, the physical alterations to the building are not considered harmful.

However, good design extends beyond the treatment of individual buildings and includes the way in which development functions as part of the wider settlement pattern. In this regard, the primary concern with the proposal relates not to the appearance of the building, but to the manner in which the site would be reconfigured and occupied.

The building currently reads as an ancillary structure associated with No.1 Pye Corner. Its conversion into an independent residential unit, with separate domestic activity and reliance on a detached parcel of land across the byway for amenity purposes, would fundamentally alter the way in which the site functions. The proposal would therefore represent an intensification of a modest plot that was not originally designed to accommodate multiple households.

The byway itself functions primarily as a secondary access route rather than a frontage for residential development. Whilst it provides access to neighbouring properties, these do not present as dwellings that front onto or are orientated towards it. The introduction of a dwelling in this location would therefore represent a departure from this established spatial hierarchy.

The proposed arrangement results in a disaggregated and fragmented form of development, whereby the built form, access, and private amenity space do not form a coherent or legible planning unit. Furthermore, the proposed dwelling would sit to the rear of existing properties and would represent the only residential unit directly addressing and accessed from the byway. As such, the proposal would introduce a form of development that is not currently present within this part of the settlement, disrupting the established pattern of development.

The constrained nature of the site, including its tight spatial relationship with neighbouring properties, limited outlook, and reliance on a physically separate area of land for amenity space, reinforces this impression. Taken together, these factors result in a form of development that does not comfortably integrate with its surroundings and would be perceived as an artificial subdivision rather than a natural evolution of the settlement.

The resubmitted application does not introduce any substantive changes to the layout, siting, or relationship of the development when compared to the previously refused scheme. Whilst the applicant has set out their view that the proposal is consistent with local character, the physical arrangement of the development remains materially unchanged.

Conclusion

Whilst the external alterations to the building are modest and would improve its appearance, the proposal as a whole would result in the introduction of a separate residential unit in a location that would represent an isolated and uncharacteristic form of development within the byway, failing to reflect the established pattern or spatial structure of development in this part of the Conservation Area.

The resulting arrangement would represent a contrived and fragmented form of development, arising from the subdivision and intensification of a constrained plot, and would fail to respond positively to the character of the area.

For these reasons, the proposal is considered to conflict with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the design objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Heritage

Policy context

The site is located within the Box Conservation Area. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention is paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas. Local planning policy also seeks to ensure that development within Conservation Areas is sympathetic in scale, form, and materials, and does not harm the area's historic character, traditional appearance, or visual qualities.

The NPPF outlines government policy for planning. Chapter 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development. In particular:

Paragraph 208 requires LPAs should “avoid or minimise any conflict” between the heritage asset's conservation (which includes achieving its optimum viable use) and any aspect of a proposal.

Paragraph 210 requires local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable new uses and of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The Council's Core Strategy Policy CP58 'Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment' requires that designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance and encourages proposals which improve the condition of heritage assets at risk.

The Council's Core Strategy CP 57: Ensuring high quality design requires a high quality of design in all new developments. The policy requires applicants to “demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through (amongst other things) responding to the value of the natural and historic environment and being sympathetic to and conserving historic buildings and landscapes. Development is required to respond positively to the existing in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting.

Assessment

The proposal involves the conversion of an existing two-storey outbuilding into a residential dwelling. No extensions or increase in footprint are proposed, and the external works are largely limited to minor recladding and new and replacement timber fenestration.

Key points relevant to the Conservation Area include:

- The building is already part of the existing built environment and is visually contained within a narrow lane.
- Mature trees and hedgerows provide screening, limiting visibility from public viewpoints.
- The proposed works will retain the form and scale of the existing building, with modest material updates that will improve the appearance of a structure that is currently looking tired.
- There is no introduction of urbanising elements or features that would erode the historic character of the Conservation Area.

Overall, the proposed conversion is minor in scale, visually contained, and sympathetic to the character of the area. Whilst the proposal raises concerns in relation to the pattern and layout of development within the site, these do not result in harm to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area in heritage terms

Conclusion

The development is considered to preserve the character and appearance of the Box Conservation Area. The modest nature of the works, together with the building's concealed location and surrounding vegetation, ensures that the historic qualities and visual integrity of the Conservation Area are maintained, with no harm caused to it as a heritage asset. The proposal is considered to comply with the requirements of Policy CP58 to the Wiltshire Core Strategy and relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

Amenity

Policy context

Core Policy 57 (Point vii) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to respect the amenity of existing occupants and ensure appropriate amenity levels for future and neighbouring residents. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly Paragraph 135, reinforces the need for development to provide a high standard of amenity for both existing and future users. These policies guide the assessment of amenity impacts, including the quality of living conditions for future residents.

The National Design Guide advises that well-designed homes and communal areas within buildings provide a good standard and quality of internal space. This includes room sizes, floor-to-ceiling heights, internal and external storage, sunlight, daylight and ventilation. The quality of internal space needs careful consideration in higher-density developments, particularly for family accommodation, where access, privacy, daylight and external amenity space are also important.

The Council's adopted Wiltshire Design Guide states at paragraph 9.1.1 that new homes should comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS). The NDSS set out the least the gross internal floor area and built-in storage area required for dwellings – in the case of a two storey, two bedroom (3 person) house this is 70sqm, with at least 2 sq m of built in storage.

Assessment - Impact on future occupants

The proposal seeks the conversion of an existing two-storey outbuilding into a two-bedroom dwelling with a gross internal floor area of approximately 69sqm, only slightly below the 70sqm recommended

by the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS). It is acknowledged that smaller dwellings are not inherently unacceptable, provided that they offer adequate outlook, natural light, and a functional internal layout capable of delivering satisfactory living conditions.

In assessing the proposed accommodation, regard has been had to both the internal arrangement of the dwelling and its relationship with its immediate surroundings. The site is constrained, with the building positioned in close proximity to neighbouring structures, boundary treatments, and locally varying ground levels. Whilst it is clarified that only the southern side of the building is set against slightly higher ground levels, the overall setting nevertheless remains tightly enclosed.

The application proposes a number of amendments intended to improve internal light, including the enlargement of window openings, reduction in sill height to the principal ground floor window, the introduction of a more glazed front door, and the use of rooflights and internal openings to allow light to filter through the building. These changes are acknowledged as an attempt to improve the internal environment.

However, despite these amendments, the fundamental constraints of the building and its setting remain. The principal living space at ground floor level continues to be served by a single-aspect, west-facing elevation. Whilst the window openings have been marginally widened and lowered, the ability for natural light to penetrate the space remains limited by the building's relationship with its surroundings, including adjacent built form, boundary treatments and mature vegetation. The overall sense of enclosure has not been materially altered.

The reliance on secondary or borrowed light, including the use of rooflights and internal openings to supplement illumination to the ground floor accommodation, further highlights the constrained nature of the building and the difficulty in achieving adequate levels of natural light through conventional means. These interventions, whilst improving the situation to some degree, do not overcome the underlying limitations of the space.

In terms of outlook, the close proximity of neighbouring structures and the enclosing nature of the site result in a restricted visual environment, with limited depth of view and a reduced sense of openness compared to that typically expected of residential accommodation.

The proposed private amenity space would be located on a separate parcel of land across the byway. Whilst such arrangements can occur in historic contexts, in this instance the physical separation reduces the convenience and usability of the space as a direct extension of the dwelling and reinforces the overall fragmented nature of the living environment.

Taken together, the combination of a single-aspect layout, constrained outlook, reliance on borrowed light, and separation of private outdoor space results in a form of accommodation that would not provide a high-quality living environment for future occupants.

It is recognised that the conversion of existing buildings may involve a degree of compromise. However, in this case, those compromises go beyond what would reasonably be expected, and the proposal would result in substandard living conditions contrary to policy.

Turning to the amenity and living conditions of surrounding, existing residents, it is evident that whilst the building exists, the proposals includes several new openings and rooflights, which have been considered with regard to neighbouring properties:

West (front) elevation: Two first-floor windows and two rooflights would look towards "Southfields." There is approximately 13m separation between the buildings, and some existing tree screening. Given this distance and natural screening, no unacceptable overlooking or loss of privacy is anticipated.

South elevation: A single new first-floor window faces mature conifers and a garage. There is no direct view into neighbouring properties; therefore, no amenity concerns arise.

North elevation: One new first-floor window faces No.2 Pye Corner, which is approximately 4m away. This window serves a bathroom. Obscure glazing could be secured by condition to prevent overlooking, ensuring neighbour privacy.

East (rear) elevation: Two rooflights are proposed to serve the staircase and bathroom. These are not principal windows and their height and orientation would limit views into neighbouring properties. In addition, the ground floor WC, which is located on the boundary with No.2 Pye Corner, currently forms part of the domestic use of No.1 Pye Corner. While its incorporation into the new dwelling would create a separate household immediately adjacent, the physical room and footprint remain unchanged, and no additional built form is proposed along the boundary. It is therefore not considered that this would result in materially greater harm to neighbour amenity than the existing situation.

No other features of the proposal, including building massing or garden use, are considered to result in overbearing impacts, overshadowing, or other harm to neighbours' living conditions.

A representation has been received raising concerns regarding overlooking from the proposed garden area towards neighbouring land. This has been carefully considered. The land identified as private amenity space is currently in use as part of the garden associated with No.1 Pye Corner, and therefore some degree of overlooking and domestic activity already occurs. Whilst the proposal would result in the use of this area by an additional household, and therefore a modest intensification of activity, it is not considered that this would give rise to unacceptable additional impacts in terms of overlooking or loss of privacy, having regard to existing relationships, separation distances and boundary treatments.

Conclusion

With regard to the living conditions of future occupiers, it is concluded that, despite amendments to glazing and internal layout intended to improve light and outlook, the proposal remains constrained by the inherent limitations of the site and building.

The dwelling would rely heavily on single-aspect accommodation, limited outlook and indirect sources of light, together with a physically separate area of amenity space. As a result, the proposal would fail to provide an acceptable standard of living accommodation.

The proposal is therefore contrary to Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which require development to provide a high standard of amenity for future occupants.

With regard to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, subject to appropriate conditions (including obscure glazing where necessary), the proposal is not considered to result in unacceptable impacts.

Highways & Parking

Policy context

Transport considerations are an important aspect of assessing planning applications. Development proposals are expected to:

- Provide safe and suitable access for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and those with mobility impairments;
- Avoid severe residual impacts on the local highway network;
- Promote sustainable modes of transport and reduce reliance on private vehicles; and
- Provide appropriate parking and cycle provision in accordance with adopted standards.

Relevant policies include Core Policy 60 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, supported by the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan and associated strategies. Development should also ensure that public rights of way are protected and remain available for public use.

Assessment

The proposal seeks the conversion of an existing two-storey outbuilding into a two-bedroom dwelling. No on-site parking is proposed. Wiltshire Council's parking standards would ordinarily require provision for two vehicles; however, the application is presented as a car-free development.

The Council's Highway Engineer has been consulted and raises no objection to the proposal. While it is acknowledged that Box is not typically a location where car-free development would be expected, regard has been had to the accessibility of the site to alternative modes of transport.

The site is located within approximately 200 metres of bus stops on both Devizes Road and Bath Road, which provide regular services to nearby settlements including Bath, Chippenham and Devizes. These services operate throughout the day, providing opportunities for travel without reliance on a private car. On this basis, the site is considered to benefit from reasonable accessibility to sustainable transport options.

It is also noted that there is a relatively high demand for on-street parking in the surrounding area. However, the potential displacement of up to two vehicles associated with the proposed dwelling is not considered to result in severe impacts on highway safety or the operation of the local network.

Pedestrian access to the site is provided via the existing byway (Public Right of Way BOX97), which serves neighbouring properties. The Highway Engineer has confirmed that this arrangement is acceptable.

Conclusion

The proposal is considered acceptable in highway terms. Whilst no on-site parking is proposed, the scale of the development and the site's accessibility to alternative modes of transport mean that the resulting impact on the highway network would not be severe. Subject to appropriate informatives to protect the public right of way, the proposal complies with Core Policy 60 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Public Rights of Way

The application site is accessed via a byway open to all traffic (BOX97), which serves as a public right of way and provides access to a number of neighbouring properties.

The Council's Public Rights of Way Officer has been consulted and raises no objection to the proposal. In reaching this view, it is noted that the development is proposed as a car-free

scheme, and therefore would not be expected to materially increase vehicular movements along the byway once completed.

The primary considerations relate to ensuring that the public right of way remains available, unobstructed and safe for public use during the construction phase. In this regard, the Public Rights of Way Officer has recommended that appropriate informatives be attached to any permission. These include requirements to:

- obtain prior approval for any temporary closure of the byway,
- avoid obstruction of the route through the storage of materials, plant or works, and
- ensure that any damage to the surface of the byway is appropriately reinstated.

Subject to the inclusion of these informatives, the proposal is considered acceptable in relation to its impact on the public right of way network.

Ecology and biodiversity

Policy Context

The ecological impact of development is a key planning consideration, particularly where sites may support protected species or are located within consultation zones for designated habitats. Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires that development:

- Avoids harm to ecological assets, including habitats that support legally protected species;
- Maintains and enhances biodiversity and ecological networks; and
- Secures appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures where necessary.

National policy within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) similarly requires planning decisions to protect and enhance biodiversity and to secure measurable net gains where applicable.

The application site is located within the consultation zone for the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and therefore has potential to result in impacts on internationally protected bat species. In such circumstances, the Local Planning Authority is required to consider the need for a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

Background / Submissions

The previous application was refused in part due to insufficient ecological information, including a lack of evidence to demonstrate that the proposal would not adversely affect protected species, priority habitats, or the SAC.

The current application is supported by a Bat Scoping Survey and Nesting Bird Report (KD Consulting, April 2026), together with updated plans and supporting information. These documents have been reviewed by the Council's Ecologist.

Assessment

The submitted Bat Scoping Survey identifies the existing building as having negligible potential to support roosting bats, with no evidence of current or historic use. The wider site is recognised as providing habitat suitable for foraging and commuting bats.

Given the site's location within the SAC consultation zone, a test of likely significance has been undertaken by the competent authority. This concludes that, having regard to the scale and nature of the development, there is no mechanism for adverse effect on the SAC, and the proposal can be screened out of Appropriate Assessment.

The Ecologist advises that, subject to the retention of boundary features and the implementation of a sensitive lighting strategy, the functionality of habitats for bats would be maintained, and the proposal would not result in harm to protected species.

In relation to priority habitat, the site has been identified through mapping as containing areas of traditional orchard and deciduous woodland. However, the submitted ecological information confirms that these habitats are not present within the application site, with the garden area comprising managed grassland and a single tree.

With regard to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), the Ecologist advises that the development is likely to fall below the de minimis threshold, subject to confirmation that it does not impact priority habitat and affects only a limited area of habitat. Notwithstanding this, Core Policy 50 requires development to provide biodiversity enhancements. In this case, measures such as bat and bird boxes, together with a sensitive lighting strategy, could be secured by condition.

Conclusion

Subject to the imposition of conditions to secure ecological enhancements, compliance with the submitted ecological information, and the submission of a sensitive lighting strategy, the proposal is considered to:

- Avoid harm to protected species and habitats;
- Have no adverse effect on the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC; and
- Comply with the requirements of Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the NPPF.

The ecological concerns identified in relation to the previous application are therefore considered to have been satisfactorily addressed.

Landscape and visual impact

Policy Context

Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to:

- Protect, conserve, and enhance landscape character and quality.
- Respect local distinctiveness, key views, and visual receptors.
- Give particular weight to impacts on National Landscapes and locally valued landscapes.

The Wiltshire Design Guide SPD (2024) promotes a context-led approach, encouraging integration with natural features and settlement patterns while avoiding visual intrusion.

The Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy (2022–2030) supports landscape protection through green infrastructure, habitat connectivity, and nature-based solutions.

The NPPF emphasises the need to protect and enhance valued landscapes, particularly those with scenic, historic, or ecological significance. Planning decisions should:

- Recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.
- Safeguard key views, local distinctiveness, and landscape settings.
- Ensure development is well-integrated into its surroundings and avoids visual intrusion, especially in sensitive or designated areas.

Landscape impact must be considered alongside biodiversity, heritage, and green infrastructure objectives, with mitigation measures encouraged where harm cannot be avoided.

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF requires that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.

Under Section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, LPAs and other relevant authorities must now “*seek to further*” the statutory purposes of National Landscapes (formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty), replacing the previous duty to merely “have regard to” them.

This is an active duty, requiring authorities to take reasonable and proportionate steps to support the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, special qualities, and key characteristics of these designated areas when exercising any function that affects them.

Assessment

The application represents a resubmission of a previously refused proposal, with no material changes to the scale or external form of the development.

The site lies within the Cotswolds National Landscape. The Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan identifies the site area as part of an Enclosed Limestone Valley, characterised by moderately broad but enclosed river valleys with steep sides, woodland on upper and steeper slopes, a complex mosaic of fields, hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and a network of valley roads connecting settlements and isolated dwellings. Key qualities include intimate and secluded character, wooded backdrops, visual containment by landform, and a strong sense of historic landscape pattern and vernacular structures.

The proposal seeks the conversion of an existing two-storey outbuilding to the rear of 1 Pye Corner into a single dwelling. The building is already part of the existing built environment and no extensions or additional structures are proposed. The works involve only minor recladding and internal adaptation.

Given the site's context it is considered that the building is largely contained within the existing plot, with mature trees and hedgerows providing visual screening. The valley's enclosure and wooded backdrop remain largely unaffected by the conversion particularly as there is no expansion of the built footprint

In addition, views from public vantage points in the valley are largely uninterrupted, preserving the characteristic intimate and secluded qualities.

Overall, the development does not materially alter the landscape character, topography, or settlement pattern of the Enclosed Limestone Valley.

Conclusion

Whilst the proposal has implications in relation to the pattern of development and residential amenity, these do not translate into wider landscape harm. The proposed conversion is considered to conserve the key characteristics and visual qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape. The scale, design, and location of the development mean that the intimate, enclosed character of the valley and its wooded setting are retained, and the proposal is therefore acceptable in landscape terms.

PLANNING BALANCE & CONCLUSION

The proposal involves the conversion and refurbishment of an existing outbuilding to create one additional dwelling. The benefits of the scheme include the reuse of an existing structure, modest improvements to the visual condition of the building, and the delivery of a single dwelling in the context of the Council's current shortfall in housing land supply. These factors attract moderate positive weight.

Since the refusal of the previous application, additional information has been submitted in relation to ecology and biodiversity. The Council's Ecologist raises no objection subject to conditions, and it is considered that the proposal would not result in harm to protected species or the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation. These matters are therefore no longer considered to weigh against the proposal.

The proposal is also considered acceptable in highway, landscape and heritage terms, with no objections raised by consultees in these respects. These neutral considerations neither weigh for nor against the development in the overall planning balance.

Notwithstanding the above, significant concerns remain in respect of the quality of the development proposed.

The proposal would introduce a separate residential unit within a constrained and atypically arranged site, resulting in a contrived and fragmented form of development that fails to reflect the established pattern of development within this part of the settlement. In particular, the proposal would represent the only dwelling directly addressing and accessed from the byway, departing from the established spatial hierarchy of development and appearing as an isolated and uncharacteristic form of development in this location. This conflict with Core Policy 57 attracts significant weight against the proposal.

In addition, the proposed dwelling would provide substandard living conditions for future occupants. Despite amendments intended to improve light and outlook, the accommodation would remain constrained by its single-aspect layout, limited outlook, reliance on borrowed light and separation of private amenity space. This results in a poor-quality living environment that fails to meet the requirements of Core Policy 57 and paragraph 135 of the NPPF, and attracts significant weight against the proposal.

When assessed in the round, the harm arising from the poor quality of the development and its failure to respond appropriately to the established pattern of development is considered to outweigh the limited benefits of delivering one additional dwelling.

RECOMMENDATION: That Planning Permission be REFUSED for the following reasons:

1. Substandard living conditions for future occupants

The proposed dwelling would provide restricted outlook and limited private amenity space. The constrained nature of the plot, combined with limited daylight and lack of adequate external space, results in substandard living conditions for future occupants. This conflicts with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Section 12 of the NPPF, which require new development to provide good-quality internal and external living environments.

2. Character and pattern of development

The creation of a separate dwelling and subdivision of an existing garden results in a form of development that is incongruous with the established pattern and character of the area. While the existing building is traditional and the lane informal, the introduction of a second independent household on the plot, with separate domestic activity and limited private amenity space, produces a contrived form of backland development. This arrangement is not consistent with the historic pattern or intended function of the plot, and is harmful to the visual

and functional character of development along this lane. The proposal therefore conflicts with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Section 12 of the NPPF, which seek well-designed places that respect local character.

Informative:

For the avoidance of doubt, the assessment of the scheme has been made against and with regard to the following plans and documents:

Location Plan PL04 received 13 April 2026
Proposed Floor and Roof Plans PL05 received 13 April
Proposed Site Plan PL07 received 13 April 2026
Planning and Design Statement received 13 April 2026
Proposed Elevations PL06 received 13 April 2026
Existing Floor and Roof Plan PL01 received 13 April 2026
Existing Elevations received 13 April 2026
Existing Site Plan PL03 received 13 April 2026
Bat Report April 2026 received 13 April 2026
Application form received 13 April 2026