

APPLICATION FOR FULL-PLANNING PERMISSION

CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/00630
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Durrington Library, 75 Bulford Road, Durrington, Salisbury, SP4 8EU
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Demolition of the existing porta cabin building and the construction of a pair of semi-detached dwellings, landscaping and associated works.
RECOMMENDATION:	Refuse

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The library was moved to Durrington Village Hall on the High Street circa 29 March 2023 leaving the current site of Bulford Road vacant. The site has a small car park at the front and there is a bus stop on the corner of the site immediately on the boundary with No 73. The cabin is a single storey building and is bounded by the health centre and No 73, both of which are single storey buildings, which all enjoy a large gap (and relative building line) from the main road. No 71 behind is a chalet bungalow (one and a half storey building). There are two storey buildings on both sides of the street. The 'building' was sold at auction, by Wiltshire Council, in circa October 2024. Durrington Library is not listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV), nor has it ever been nominated for listing.

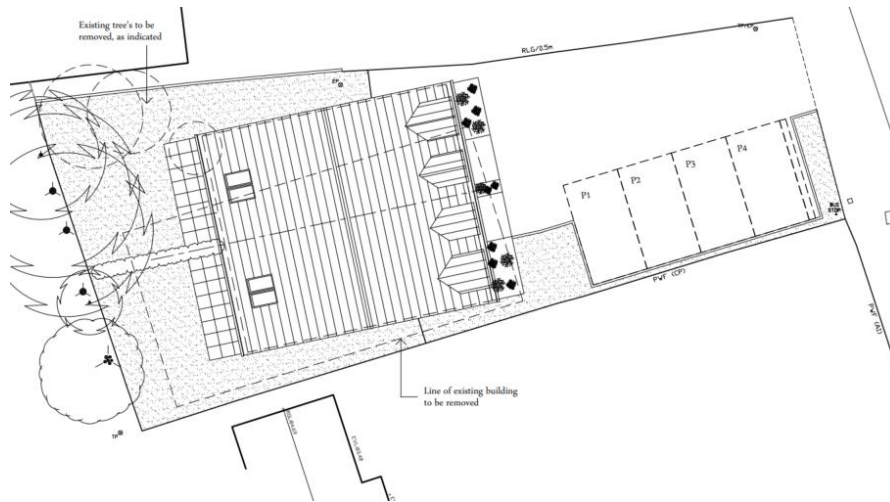


Council Mapping Image and Site Location Plan

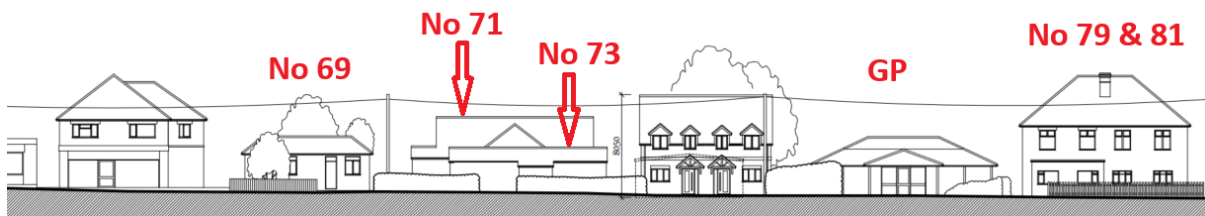
PROPOSAL

This is a full planning application for the *“Demolition of the existing porta cabin building and the construction of a pair of semi-detached dwellings, landscaping and associated works”* at Durrington Library, 75 Bulford Road, Durrington, Salisbury, SP4 8EU.

Revised plans have been received and the subject of re-consultation which has seen a reduction in the height of the ridge from 9.4m to 8.1m. The revisions also removed the rear bedroom windows and replaced them with velux windows. No other changes were made.



Proposed Site Plan



Proposed Street Scene Plan

For the avoidance of doubt, the Council was not approached by the applicant or their new planning agent to engage in pre-application discussions or negotiations following the refusal of application PL/2025/03532 and prior to the submission of the current application. The Council had previously provided advice outlining the measures required to fully address the reasons for refusal. However, this advice has not been fully taken on board, with the current revised proposal only achieving a partial reduction in the height of the building, as described.

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary

PL/2025/03532 - Full planning permission Decision - Refuse Date: 2/6/2025 – Demolish the former porta cabin library and erect 4 x1 bedroom flats, with car parking and access.

Application PL/2025/03532 was refused for 6 reasons

1. The proposed development would result in the loss of a community facility within Durrington. The applicant has not provided any evidence to demonstrate that the site is no longer economically viable for continued community use. Furthermore, the only marketing undertaken has been through an auction process conducted by Wiltshire Council, which does not meet the marketing requirements set out in Core Policy 49 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Core Policy 49 requires a robust and transparent marketing exercise to demonstrate that all reasonable efforts have been made to retain the site in community use. Officers have requested that the site be subject to such a process, but no further information or evidence has been submitted by the applicant in response.

In the absence of a compliant marketing strategy and without clear justification for the loss of the facility, the Council is not satisfied that the existing community use should be relinquished in favour of residential development. The proposal is therefore contrary to all criteria of Core Policy 49 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and conflicts with paragraphs 88(d) and 98(c) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which seek to protect and retain valued community services and facilities.

2. The proposed development, by virtue of its design, bulk, massing, flat-roofed form, and choice of materials, would result in a large, utilitarian structure that appears visually intrusive, unattractive, and incongruous within the existing street scene. The scheme fails to achieve a high standard of design and does not contribute positively to local character or create a strong sense of place, as it does not draw upon or complement the established context of the area.

Furthermore, the application does not provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the development would not result in the loss of neighbouring trees. While these trees may have limited individual visual amenity, they form part of the existing landscape structure that helps soften the urban environment and contribute to the overall character of the area.

The proposal also fails to provide any private amenity space for the two first-floor flats. The garden areas allocated to the ground floor units are of inadequate size, irregular in shape, and would be significantly constrained by the proximity of the proposed building and any necessary boundary treatments. As such, the development would not provide a satisfactory standard of residential amenity for future occupants.

The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to Core Policy 57 (criteria ii, iii, and vii) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, Sections 4.4.7, 9.2.1, 9.2.2, 9.2.3, and 9.2.4 of the Wiltshire Design Guide, and paragraph 135 (a, b, c, d, and f) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

3. The proposed development includes the introduction of new first-floor habitable room windows on the southern side elevation, which would result in direct overlooking of the private amenity spaces of both Nos. 71 and 73. This would lead to an unacceptable loss of privacy for the occupants of these neighbouring properties. Additionally, the proposed first-floor bathroom window on the same elevation, even if fitted with obscure glazing, would contribute to a perceived sense of overlooking into the front garden of No. 73, further impacting residential amenity.

Moreover, due to its overall design, scale, bulk, and close proximity to the shared boundary, the proposal would have an overbearing and unneighbourly impact on No. 73's outlook. The cumulative effect of these factors would significantly diminish the quality of the living environment for neighbouring residents.

As such, the proposal is considered to be contrary to Core Policy 57 (criterion vii) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, which seeks to ensure that development protects, respects, and where possible enhances the amenity of existing occupants.

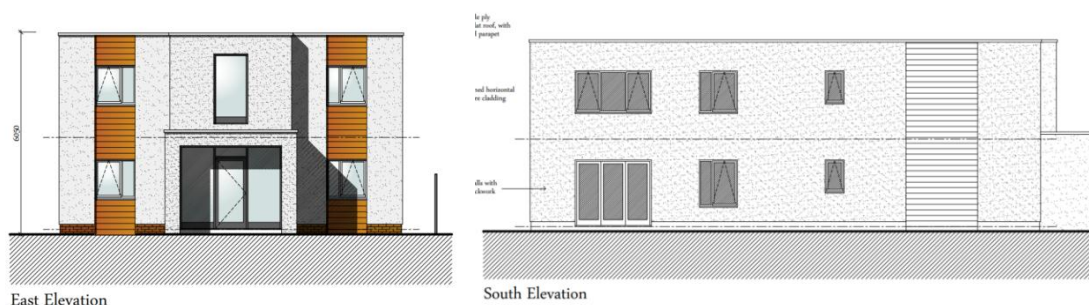
4. The application has not been accompanied by a Phase 1 Ecology Survey, Tree Survey, Tree Constraints Plan, or Arboricultural Impact Assessment. In the absence of this information, the Council is unable to determine whether the site holds any ecological value or whether the proposed development would result in unacceptable harm to ecological habitats or neighbouring trees. As such, the proposal fails to demonstrate compliance with Core Policies 50 and 57 (ii) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, and is contrary to paragraph 187(a) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

5. The proposed development would result in the loss of over 25m² of grassed area, with no supporting information provided to demonstrate how the scheme would achieve the minimum 10% biodiversity net gain required by national policy.

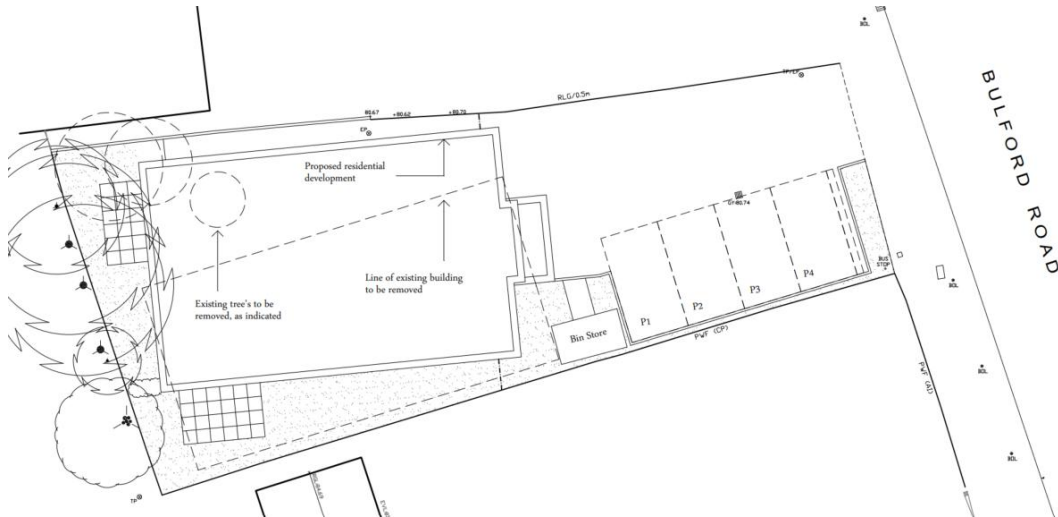
Furthermore, no evidence has been submitted to indicate that the development would be exempt from this requirement. In the absence of such justification or a biodiversity net gain assessment, the proposal is considered contrary to Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, paragraph 187(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and paragraph 1A(b) of Article 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. It also fails to align with national objectives for securing measurable biodiversity enhancements through development.

6 The application site lies within the catchment of the River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC), where development has the potential to result in adverse effects—either alone or in combination with other proposals—through the discharge of phosphorus in wastewater. In accordance with the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, an Appropriate Assessment (AA) must be undertaken by the Competent Authority (the Local Planning Authority) to assess the potential for significant effects and the adequacy of any proposed avoidance or mitigation measures.

The proposal has not been accompanied by a completed River Avon SAC Nutrient Neutrality Calculator or any supporting evidence to demonstrate how nutrient neutrality would be achieved. As such, the application fails to comply with Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and does not meet the requirements necessary to ensure protection of the River Avon SAC.



Elevations of PL/2025/03532



Block Plan of PL/2025/03532

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy:

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

Development Plan:

The development plan for Wiltshire comprises the *Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)* (adopted January 2015) and any made neighbourhood plans, which remains the principal statutory planning document guiding development across the county. In line with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Though the development plan is considered as a whole, those parts deemed to be particularly relevant to this application are listed below:

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

- Core Policy 1 Settlement Strategy;
- Core Policy 2 Delivery Strategy;
- Core Policy 4 Spatial Strategy Amesbury Community Area;
- Core Policy 49 Protection of rural services and community facilities;
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development;
- Core Policy 67 Flood Risk

Neighbourhood Plan: Durrington does not have a neighbourhood plan (or designation)

Supplementary Planning Documents and other Guidance:

- Wiltshire Design Guide (adopted April 2024)
- Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026, adopted 2015 - including the Car Parking Strategy and Cycling Strategy, adopted 2015
- Wiltshire Housing Land Supply Statement (using base date April 2025) published June 2026

ISSUES

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

- Whether the proposal constitutes EIA development
- Whether the development is acceptable in principle (CP 1 and 2)
- Whether the scheme constitutes high quality design (CP 57)
- Whether the scheme would have an acceptable impact upon the reasonable living conditions of the adjoining occupants (CP 57)
- Whether the proposal would have a negative effect upon highway safety, including if there is sufficient parking for the proposed development (CP 61 and 64)
- Whether the site can be adequately drained without increasing flood risk elsewhere (CP 67)
- Whether there would be any harmful impacts upon protected species or priority habitats (CP 50)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Durrington Town Council – No recommendation

“The Tree survey says the trees can be retained and easily protected. The block plan shows existing trees to be removed. This needs to be clarified please.”

Wiltshire Council Highways: No objection subject to conditions

Wiltshire Council Ecology: No objection subject to conditions

Wiltshire Council Tree Officer: No objection subject to conditions

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:

- 22 neighbour notification letters sent to adjoining and nearby properties;

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

Below is a summary of the representations received during the consultation period. Only material planning considerations have been taken into account in the assessment of this application. Non-material issues, such as property values or private legal disputes, cannot be considered in the determination process.

Four letters of objection received raising the following key concerns:

- *The road is extremely busy already, trying to get in and out of neighbouring properties. Also it will back on to several gardens taking away their privacy*
- *My property will be overlooked removing all privacy*
- *The surrounding properties are bungalows and if anything should be built on the site, it should be in line with that. The example houses that have been used in the plans do not overlook any other properties and are away from the proposed site. This build directly impacts the privacy of 71 and 73.*

ASSESSMENT

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

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

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

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended), the local planning authority has considered whether the proposed development constitutes EIA development.

No Screening Opinion Issued

No formal screening opinion was requested or issued. However, the local planning authority has considered the scale and nature of the development as part of the application process and is satisfied that it does not constitute EIA development under the 2017 Regulations.

Principle of Development

Policy Context

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.

Under application PL/2025/03532, it was considered that Core Policy 49 also applied which states:

“Proposals involving the loss of a community service or facility will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the building is no longer economically viable for an alternative community use. Preference will be given to retaining the existing use in the first instance, then for an alternative community use. Where this is not possible, a mixed use, which still retains a substantial portion of the community facility/service will be supported. Redevelopment for non-community service/facility will only be permitted as a last resort and where all other options have been exhausted.

In order for such proposals to be supported, a comprehensive marketing plan will need to be undertaken and the details submitted with any planning application. Only where it can be demonstrated that all preferable options have been exhausted will a change of use to a non-community use be considered”

Due to the proposal not including evidence of said marketing, this led to the first reason for refusal of that application. The applicants in this application have set out that CP49 does not apply because of how the policy is defined geographically. The applicants contend that as Durrington is a Market Town, and CP49 only applies to “smaller settlements”, the policy does not apply here at all.

Assessment

Durrington is designated as a Market Town in the WCS and therefore the principle of development for residential development is supported. It must also however comply with all other policies in the plan and how Wiltshire Council apply CP49.

Officers acknowledge that Core Policy 49 may be open to differing interpretations and, for the avoidance of doubt, are not seeking to establish a definitive position on its application in this case. However, in this instance, it is material that Durrington continues to be served by an alternative library facility within the town, the application site comprises a temporary structure nearing the end of its functional life, and the property has not been designated as an Asset of Community Value. In light of these factors, the Council is prepared to cede on this point of principle and does not consider it necessary to require a marketing exercise for an alternative community use.

Conclusion

It is considered that the proposal benefits from the principle of planning policy support. The first reason for refusal in application PL/2025/03532 has therefore been overcome.

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.

The National Planning Policy Framework was revised in December 2024. This has reintroduced the requirement to meet five years' worth of deliverable sites and a buffer to be applied to the five-year housing requirement in all circumstances, and has revised the Local Housing Need calculation to establish the five-year housing requirement. These factors have resulted in a substantial increase in the five-year housing requirement to be met from the previous calculation. When this is assessed against the housing land supply which can be delivered within five years, the recalculation shows a significant reduction in the number of years supply. The resulting position shows that the Council can currently demonstrate a 2.8 years housing land supply of housing at a unitary authority level. This is considered to be a substantial shortfall.

The absence of a five-year housing land supply is a material consideration in the determination of this application. In accordance with Paragraphs 78 and 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), for applications involving the provision of housing, where there is a shortfall in the supply of deliverable housing sites, the most important policies for determining the application should be considered out of date. The current housing land supply shortfall is a factor that must be considered in the planning balance and in this case, as a five-year housing land supply cannot be demonstrated, the weight that can be applied to the most important policies for determining this application should be assessed and altered in the light of the shortage in housing land supply. The proposal must be assessed against the national policy context of the need to boost housing supply and the benefits of delivering new homes whilst having particular regard to the key policies set out in paragraph 11(d)(ii) and Footnote 9 of the NPPF.

Notwithstanding the above, the application site is located within the defined Town Centre and Limits of Development, where the principle of residential development is supported by the spatial strategy of the adopted development plan. In such locations, the relevant policies are generally consistent with the objectives of the NPPF to direct development towards sustainable locations. Accordingly, whilst the absence of a five-year housing land supply

engages the provisions of Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, the conflict with the development plan is limited and the proposal benefits from a location that is inherently sustainable, with good access to services, facilities and public transport. The tilted balance therefore further reinforces the acceptability of the proposal in principle, with the benefits of contributing to housing delivery carrying significant weight, and with any adverse impacts needing to be considered in the context of both the plan-led support for development in this location and the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

Policy Context

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

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

Section 12 of the NPPF emphasises design that is:

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

The Wiltshire Design Guide encourages sensitivity to local character, materials, and architectural styles and supports modern living standards while maintaining aesthetic and functional quality.

Building for a Healthy Life Framework promotes healthy, inclusive, and sustainable places. The document encourages:

- Walkability.
- Access to green space.
- Active design principles for well-being.

Assessment

This application represents a significant improvement on the previously refused scheme (PL/2025/03532 – reason for refusal No 2). The design has been revised to propose a semi-detached pair in place of four one-bedroom flats, alongside the removal of the flat roof in favour of a more traditional built form and an improved material palette.

Whilst there is no inherent objection to the design of the semi-detached pair in isolation, the proposal must be assessed in the context of the surrounding street scene and the constraints of the site. In this regard, it is considered that the development would still fail to assimilate satisfactorily, resulting in a visually intrusive and incongruous addition to the street scene.

The site is constrained by its narrow yet deep plot, a characteristic it shares with the adjoining properties, namely the general practice health centre and No. 73. Both neighbouring buildings are single storey in form and are set back approximately 24 metres from the pavement. In

addition, No. 69, located adjacent to No. 73, is also single storey, while to the rear of No. 73 lies No. 71, a chalet bungalow of one-and-a-half storeys.

Beyond the immediate site, Bulford Road is characterised predominantly by two-storey development on both sides (with the exception of No. 96 opposite, which is a bungalow). Notwithstanding this wider pattern, the application site and its four immediate neighbours form a distinct 'microcosm', characterised by buildings that are set back from the main road, with low profiles and limited built form.

Officers consider that the erection of a two-storey building on the application site would continue to result in harmful massing impacts on the street scene, particularly in relation to the adjoining buildings. The overall scale, bulk and visual weight of the proposal would represent an abrupt and excessive departure from the more modest form of neighbouring development.

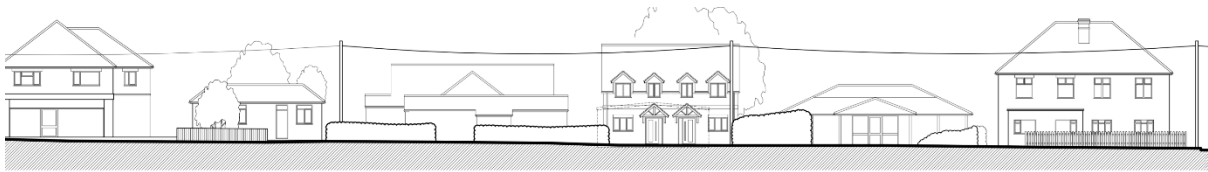
Furthermore, the proposed building would be positioned significantly forward of the adjacent properties, such that the full width of its substantial side gable elevations (approximately 11.4 metres in length) would be clearly visible when approaching from either direction. While the submitted street scene drawing illustrates this impact in frontal views, Officers consider that, in reality, the prominence of the building within the wide and open street frontage would result in a significantly greater visual impact.

In addition, the applicant has not followed Officer advice that, given the constraints of the site, the ridge height of No. 71 (the one-and-a-half storey chalet bungalow) would represent a more appropriate upper limit for development. A reduced ridge and eaves height would allow the proposal to integrate more successfully into the street scene.

Consequently, the proposal would remain a visually intrusive and incongruous form of development, and the previous reason for refusal has not been satisfactorily addressed.



Google Street View Image of the site



Proposed Cross Section Plan

The PL/2025/03532 application was also refused on the basis that the proposed development would result in the loss of neighbouring trees. The applicants have submitted a tree survey with recommendations as to how to protect them during construction. The Council's Tree Officer has no objection to this subject to those details being implemented on site. Therefore, this part of the reason for refusal falls away.

However, reason for refusal 2 under application ref. PL/2025/03532 also cited the lack of adequate private amenity space for two of the flats, including concerns that the space provided was of insufficient size, irregular in form, and constrained by the proximity of the proposed building and boundary treatments.

Section 9.2.1 of the Wiltshire Design Guide states that all dwellings should be provided with private open space in the form of a garden. Section 9.2.2 further advises that minimum garden areas for houses should be equivalent to the footprint of the dwelling. In addition, Section 9.2.3 requires that gardens avoid excessive shading and overshadowing, with no more than one third of the garden typically in shade at any one time. Section 4.4.7 also emphasises that garden sizes should comfortably serve the typical needs of future occupants.

Officers acknowledge that the current layout represents a notable improvement compared to application PL/2025/03532. However, the change from flats to semi-detached dwellings materially alters the likely occupancy, with each unit now providing three bedrooms and therefore more likely to accommodate families. This increases the expectation for functional and usable outdoor amenity space.

In this case, each dwelling has an approximate footprint of 100sqm, whereas the gardens are limited to approximately 60–70sqm, including narrow side sections. The principal rear garden areas are west-facing with depths of approximately 5.9–6.4m and are positioned between a building with an 8.1m ridge height and the conifer boundary of No. 71, which is currently around 4m in height and could reasonably be expected to grow further. As a result, the gardens are likely to experience significant shading for prolonged periods of the day, with a limited window for direct sunlight, potentially between around 12:00 and 14:00 when the sun is due south.

Notwithstanding the above, the gardens would be private, secure and of a broadly usable size. At approximately 60sqm, the spaces would be capable of accommodating a modest level of outdoor activity, particularly if the side areas are used for storage to allow the main garden (approximately 6m x 7m) to function as usable amenity space.

Whilst officers consider that the proposal does not achieve a high standard of design as required by Core Policy 57, and does not fully accord with the expectations of the Wiltshire

Design Guide in respect of private amenity space, the shortfall is not considered to be of such severity as to warrant refusal on this basis alone.

The size and shape of the gardens have improved compared to the previous scheme and, although they are likely to remain subject to significant shading, they would still receive limited periods of direct sunlight (estimated at approximately 1–2 hours per day) for much of the year.

On balance, it is therefore considered that this element of the previous reason for refusal has been sufficiently addressed.

Conclusion

Overall, whilst the current proposal represents a number of improvements over the previously refused scheme, including in relation to private amenity space and tree impacts, it has not overcome the fundamental design concerns relating to its relationship with the surrounding built form. The two-storey scale, forward siting and substantial bulk of the building would remain at odds with the distinctive pattern of low-profile, set-back development that characterises this part of Bulford Road.

As such, the development would continue to appear visually intrusive and incongruous within this localised context, resulting in harm to the character and appearance of the street scene. Accordingly, the proposal fails to meet the requirements of Core Policy 57 and the objectives of the Wiltshire Design Guide, and the previous reason for refusal in respect of design and visual impact remains unresolved.

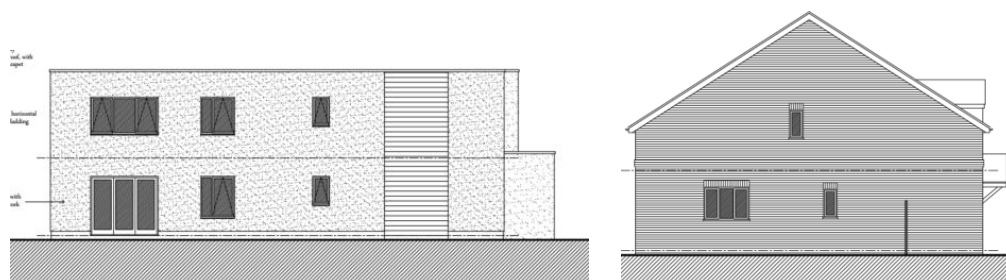
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Policy Context

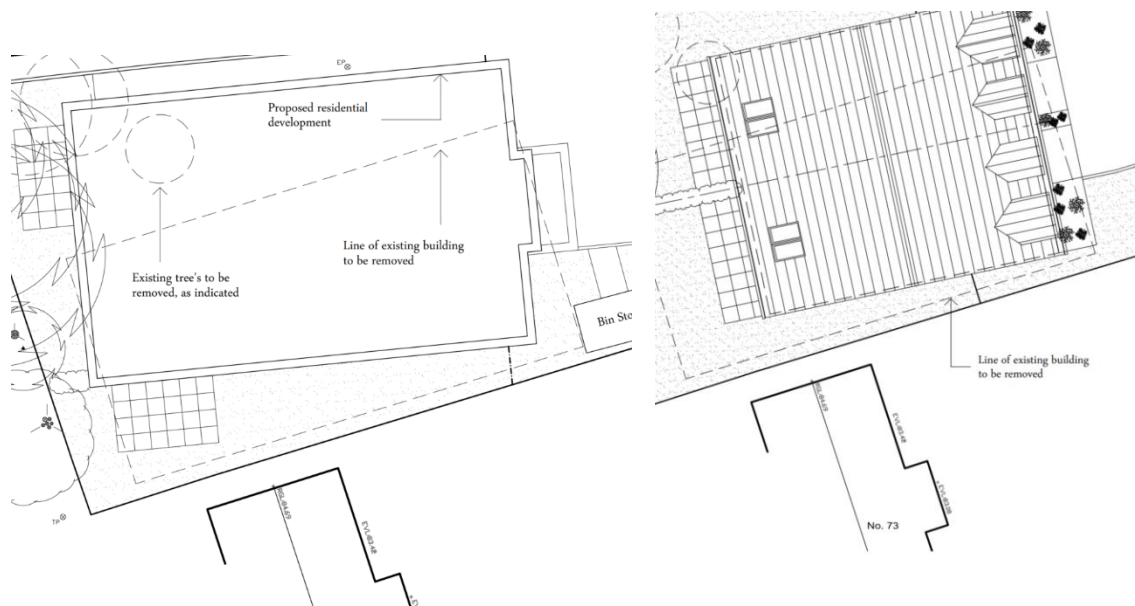
Core Policy 57 (Point vii) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to respect the amenity of existing occupants and ensure appropriate amenity levels for future residents.

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.

The third reason for refusal for application PL/2025/03532 was due to the introduction of first-floor windows on the southern elevation that would directly overlook the private amenity spaces of Nos. 71 and 73, resulting in a harmful loss of privacy. In addition, the scale, bulk and proximity of the building to the shared boundary would create an overbearing and unneighbourly impact, significantly harming neighbouring outlook and living conditions.



Southern Elevations for PL/2025/03532 and PL/2026/00630



Block Plans for PL/2025/03532 and PL/2026/00630

Impact on No 73

No. 73 is a detached bungalow whose three immediate neighbours are all single-storey buildings. As a result, it is currently not directly overlooked by any first-floor windows. The property benefits from a deep front garden (approximately 24m), which has historically been used as a vegetable garden. A front hedge of approximately 1.5m in height has been consistently maintained (as evidenced by Google Street View imagery), providing a degree of privacy despite the garden facing onto a public street.

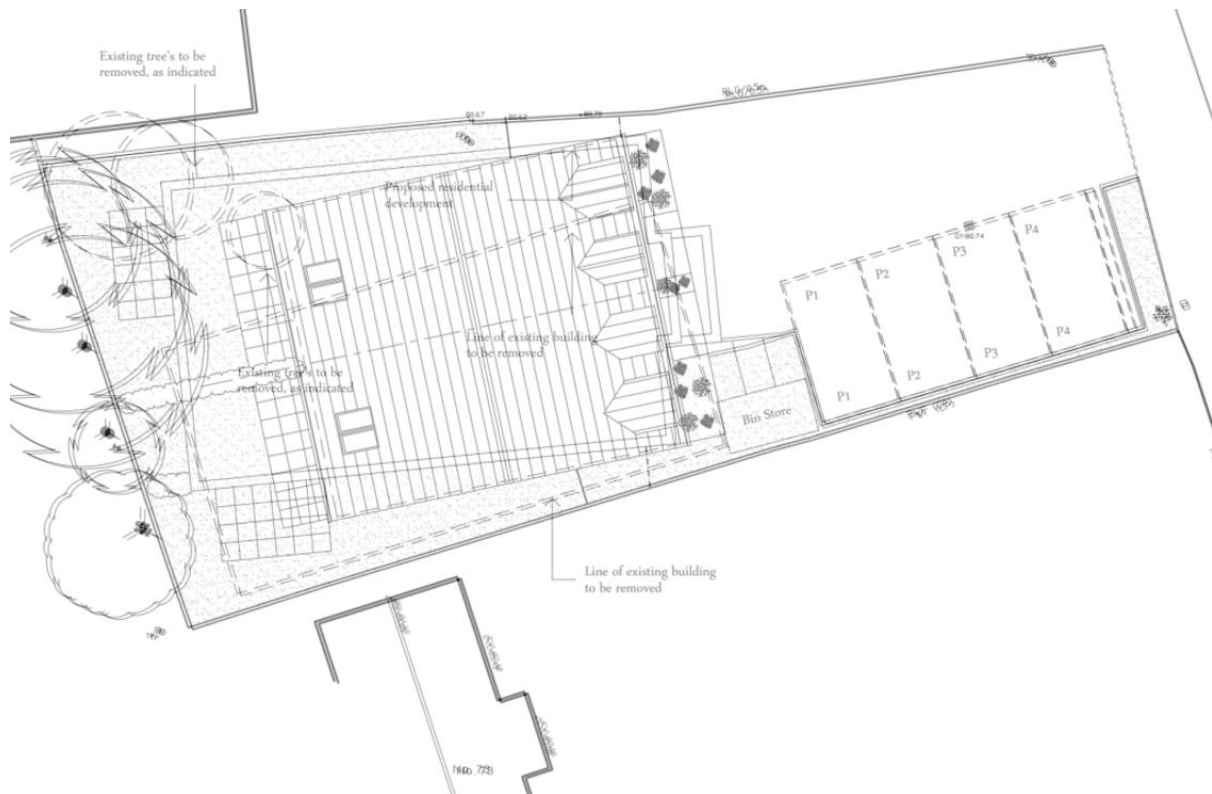
It is important to recognise that, although the garden is located to the front and therefore subject to some passive overlooking from pedestrians, a reasonable level of privacy is maintained. This is due to a combination of factors, including the depth of the garden, the height of the hedge, and the transient nature of views from passers-by. The occupier regularly uses the front garden, including an area adjacent to a small canopy at the front of the dwelling, as part of their private amenity space. Given its use as a vegetable garden, the space is actively used for extended periods.

Under application PL/2025/03532, the introduction of first-floor habitable room windows, together with a bathroom window, on the southern elevation would have resulted in direct and perceived overlooking of this space. This formed part of the reason for refusal, due to the detrimental impact on the privacy and amenity of the occupiers of No. 73.

In the current proposal, two large first-floor windows serving habitable rooms have been removed, leaving only a single bathroom window at first floor level on this elevation. Whilst this would still give rise to a degree of perceived overlooking, it would not be to the same extent or severity as the previous scheme.

On balance, although some residual concern regarding perceived overlooking remains, it is not considered sufficient in isolation to justify refusal. Accordingly, this aspect of the previous reason for refusal is considered to have been addressed.

However, application PL/2025/03532 was also refused due to the overall design, scale, bulk and close proximity of the building to the shared boundary, which resulted in an overbearing and unneighbourly impact on the outlook from No. 73.



Overlay of both applications

As illustrated by the overlay image, whilst the current proposal has reduced the overall depth of the building compared to the previously refused scheme, it would still introduce a substantial side gable measuring approximately 11.4m in length and 8.1m in height, immediately adjacent to the open but private amenity space enjoyed by No 73. Notably, this element would be positioned closer to the boundary than that approved under PL/2025/03532. By comparison, the previously proposed flat roof element had a height of approximately 6.1m.

Although officers acknowledge that there would be some improvement in the relationship with No. 73's rear garden, the revised proposal would increase the perceived scale, bulk and massing when viewed from the front garden and principal outlook of No. 73, resulting in a greater overall impact than the previous scheme. Officers submit that the introduction of this built form would be excessive and would have an unneighbourly and harmful overbearing impact on No 73.

Accordingly, the resultant relationship between the proposal and No. 73 would remain unacceptable, by reason of its overbearing and unneighbourly impact on outlook.

Impact on No 71

The impact on No. 71 has also been carefully assessed. The revised scheme has removed the first-floor bedroom windows, which, at a distance of less than 7m from the shared boundary, would have resulted in direct and unacceptable overlooking of No. 71.

In their place, the bedrooms are now served by rooflights, with cill heights approximately 1.7m above floor level. This design approach prevents occupants from looking directly down into the rear garden of No. 71, thereby addressing concerns relating to loss of privacy.

Whilst the applicants have not demonstrated compliance with Building Regulations in respect of means of escape from first-floor rooms, there is no substantive reason why this could not be resolved by providing a protected escape route, without the need to revert to the superseded plans (i.e. the bedroom windows).

During consultation and discussions at the site visit, the occupants of No. 71 indicated an intention to remove the existing conifer hedge, which currently provides a degree of screening, and raised objections to the proposal. It is acknowledged that the proposal cannot rely on the continued presence of this vegetation to mitigate overlooking, particularly given that it lies outside the applicant's control. The Wiltshire Design Guide's expectation of a 20m window-to-window distance (or typically around 10m from first-floor windows to a garden boundary) is therefore a relevant consideration.

However, this concern has been appropriately addressed through the removal of first-floor habitable room windows on this elevation. As a result and taking into account the revised relationship between the buildings, it is considered that the proposal would not result in harmful overlooking and would be sufficiently separated from the boundary so as not to give rise to an unacceptable overbearing impact on the amenity of No. 71.

Impact on the Health Centre

The Health Centre is a commercial facility to which the proposed building would largely flank its car park. Officers have checked the floorplans of the Health Centre, and the proposal would only flank approximately three side elevation windows, two of which are bathrooms. There is an interview room window, but this also has a front elevation window to which would be sufficient to supply the room with both direct sunlight and natural daylight. Therefore, no adverse harm would be caused to the occupiers of the health centre.

Highways Impacts and Parking

Policy Context

Transport implications are a key factor in assessing planning applications, especially for larger developments. Proposals must demonstrate:

- Safe and suitable access for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and those with mobility impairments.
- No severe residual impacts on the surrounding highway network.

- Promotion of sustainable travel, reducing reliance on private vehicles.
- Adequate parking and cycle provision, in line with adopted standards.
- Protection and enhancement of public rights of way and active travel routes.

Relevant policies include Core Policies 60–64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, supported by the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan, Car Parking Strategy, and Cycling Strategy. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and LTN 1/20 (DfT) provide further design guidance for active travel infrastructure.

Proposals must also ensure safe access for refuse collection vehicles and comply with the Wiltshire Council Waste Storage and Collection SPD (2017).

Where necessary, Transport Assessments or Statements should be submitted to evaluate impacts and identify mitigation. Planning conditions or legal agreements may be used to secure off-site improvements, travel plans, or contributions to sustainable transport infrastructure.

Assessment

The proposal would use the existing access and would provide two spaces per dwelling (thereby meeting its required off-road provision). The Council's Highways Officer has no objection (subject to conditions should this application be appealed to the Planning Inspectorate).

Ecology and Biodiversity

Policy Context

The ecological impact of development is a key planning consideration, especially for larger schemes. Proposals must assess and address potential effects on:

- Protected species
- Priority habitats
- Ecological networks
- Green and blue infrastructure

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to:

- Avoid harm to ecological assets.
- Deliver measurable Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), in line with the Environment Act 2021.
- Support habitat restoration and connectivity.
- Integrate biodiversity into site design.

The Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy (2022–2030) promotes nature recovery, ecosystem services, and habitat connectivity through development.

Unless exempt, National policy requires a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for major developments, demonstrated via:

- Biodiversity Metric calculations
- Ecological assessments (e.g. PEAs, Phase 1 surveys, protected species surveys)

Assessment

The Council's Ecology Officer has provided a detailed analysis of the proposal stating:

“Salisbury Plain Special Area of Conservation (SPA)

This application lies within the 6.4km zone of influence of the Salisbury Plain SPA and in light of the HRA for the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the HRA for the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan it is screened into Appropriate Assessment due to the potential impact of recreational pressure on stone curlew in combination with other plans and projects.

A strategic Appropriate Assessment (AA) has been prepared pertaining to development within the 6.4km zone of influence that could result in a likely significant effect on the SPA as a result of an increase in recreational / visitor pressure. The AA reached a conclusion of no adverse effects on the integrity of the SPA or its qualifying features provided that the council's mitigation strategy continues to be implemented. Annual stone curlew monitoring and protection measures continue to be secured by the Council.

In January 2026 Natural England (NE) confirmed that the 2026 strategic AA for Salisbury Plain SPA continues to be supported by NE.

Habitat Regulations Assessment: River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Hampshire Catchment

This development falls within the catchment of the River Avon SAC and has potential to cause adverse effects alone or in combination with other developments through discharge of phosphorus in wastewater. Appropriate Assessment must be carried out by the relevant Competent Authority (the LPA) to determine the potential significant effects and the suitability of any measures proposed to avoid or mitigate those effects.

The submitted nutrient calculation [Net Nutrient Statement] calculated a total phosphorus budget of 0.23 kg TP/year pre 2030 and 0.06 kg TP/year post 2030. The budget has been approved by Wiltshire Council.

A Council-led scheme of phosphorus credits will be available for development which meets certain criteria at a fixed cost per kilogram of phosphorus, provided supply of mitigation is available. A completed Hampshire Avon Credit Screening Approval Certificate is required to apply for this scheme. The ecology section of this certificate has been completed by the Council's ecology team for this application. This certificate can only be issued by the case officer if the application meets the two deliverability tests. Further details of the Council scheme, including eligibility criteria, current cost to purchase credits, and details of how to apply, is available on our website

Ecology officer approval	Document reviewed – 26/03/2026
Approval of Nutrient Budget	Pre 2030 budget - 0.23 kg TP/year
	Budget approved - Yes
	Date - 26/03/2026

Where an applicant chooses to progress without securing mitigation at permission stage, nutrient neutrality must be secured, before any development can lawfully commence, via a planning obligation (Grampian condition or legal agreement).

If the applicant elects to pursue this route, it should be noted that the planning permission will neither secure bespoke mitigation nor reserve any Council phosphorus credits. Consequently, there remains a risk that adequate mitigation may not be available, which could prevent the development from lawfully commencing.

A bespoke AA must be prepared and sent to NE, the application must not be determined until NE have endorsed the AA.

Protected Species

The Ecological Impact Assessment identified the existing building as having negligible potential to support roosting bats. The site is assessed to offering limited suitability for foraging and commuting bats, due to urban environment. The construction of a pair of semi-detached dwellings will not require the removal of vegetation considered to be functionally important for bat foraging or commuting. No new lighting has been proposed as part of the development and in the absence of such, together with retention of all vegetation, it is very likely that the functionality of the habitats within the site and their availability to bats will not be adversely affected.

The habitat within the proposed development site and the surrounding area is suitable for roosting, foraging and commuting bats. An increase in artificial lux levels can deter bats which could result in roost abandonment and/or the severance of key foraging areas. This will likely result in a significant negative impact upon the health of bat populations across the region. Any new lighting should be for the purposes for safe access and security and be in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standards set out by the Institute of Lighting Engineers in their publication GN01:2021, 'Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light' (ILP, 2021), and Guidance note GN08/23 "Bats and artificial lighting at night", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals.

Where possible, vegetation removal should be scheduled outside the bird breeding season (1st March–31st August) to avoid potential disturbance. If removal during this period is unavoidable, a pre-works nesting bird inspection must be conducted no more than two weeks before vegetation clearance begins. The applicant is advised to check any structure or vegetation capable of supporting breeding birds and delay removing or altering such features until after young birds have fledged. Damage to extensive areas that could contain nests/breeding birds should be undertaken outside the breeding season.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) this application is required to deliver 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The Biodiversity Gain Plan condition will automatically apply if approval is forthcoming. A completed statutory metric calculation (27 January 2026) confirming the baseline and predicted post development biodiversity units of the site has been submitted (including the baseline map).

Information in the completed on-site baseline habitat tabs is accepted as accurate based on the information submitted. The pre-development (baseline) situation is summarised below.

On-site pre-development (baseline) biodiversity value	0.02 Habitat units
	0.00 Hedgerow units
	0.00 Watercourse units
Are there any irreplaceable habitats on-site?	No
Has any habitat degradation of occurred?	No

Conclusion

While it is not expected that this development will result in significant loss of habitat, both CP50 and NPPF requires the inclusion of biodiversity enhancements, such as bird and bat boxes. Ecological enhancements are provided through the installation of 4 swift bricks, 2 bee bricks and wildlife friendly planting, within section 8 of the Ecological Impact Assessment. The location of ecological/biodiversity enhancements must be included in the site plan drawings and will become an enforceable part of the planning permission. Bird/bat boxes will continue to be available for bats/birds for the lifetime of the development.

For the avoidance of doubt, should this decision be appealed to the planning inspectorate, the requested conditions, especially that sought for nutrient mitigation will be requested by the Council. The applicants were given the choice of securing the credits via s111 prior to the determination of the application or via condition. The applicants chose the condition route.

Reasons for refusal 4, 5 and 6 of PL/2025/03532 have been satisfactorily addressed (which can be secured via condition).

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

At the heart of the NPPF there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development requiring local planning authorities to approve development proposals that accord with an up-to-date

development plan without delay; and where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless (taken from paragraph 11d of the NPPF):

- The application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing development proposed; or
- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole;

Having regard to paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework and the provisions of footnote 7, the Local Planning Authority considers that the presumption in favour of sustainable development ('tilted balance') is engaged. This is because relevant policies of the development plan are considered out-of-date.

Whilst the Council acknowledges that the tilted balance can be applied regardless of whether a site is within the limits of development of a market town but submits that this is not a decisive matter in the application as the proposal is acceptable in principle (CP1 and CP2) in any regard.

Whilst the key policy, CP57, cannot be given full weight either (as it is a restrictive housing policy) it is still given substantial weight because it is broadly in line with the aims and principles contained within the NPPF that good design is a key part of sustainable development. This application has demonstrated that there are clear adverse impacts which significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

In weighing the planning balance, the following factors have been considered:

Benefits of the Proposal

Provision of Market Housing

The delivery of new homes is a significant but limited benefit of two additional dwellings. As of the latest Housing Land Supply Statement (June 2026), the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land, with a shortfall that is considered substantial.

- **Benefit:** Provision of 2 new dwellings.
- **Weight:** Significant weight.

Socio-Economic Benefits

The proposal will generate economic benefits during construction. This includes direct employment in the construction sector, supply chain benefits, and increased local spending by future residents. These benefits align with paragraph 85 of the NPPF, which supports the role of housing in promoting economic growth and resilience.

- **Benefit:** Economic uplift through construction jobs and post-occupation local expenditure.
- **Weight:** limited to moderate weight.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Where the proposal demonstrates a measurable and meaningful uplift in biodiversity, this is a benefit in line with the Environment Act 2021 and Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

- **Benefit:** Delivery of 10% biodiversity net gain on-site

- **Weight:** Moderate weight.

Regeneration or Brownfield Redevelopment

The reuse of previously developed (brownfield) land is a key objective of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, which promotes the efficient use of land and prioritises development on brownfield sites before greenfield alternatives. The proposal involves the principle of regeneration of a derelict or underutilised site.

- **Benefit:** Regeneration of a previously developed site that currently detracts from the landscape and local character.
- **Weight:** Limited weight due to the design of the proposed development being unacceptable.

Identified Harms

Where harms are identified, they must be considered in terms of their nature, extent, and policy conflict, and whether they significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development. The following harms have been identified:

Conflict with Spatial Strategy

Whilst Wiltshire Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land, this does not render development plan policies relating to the principle of development irrelevant; such policies remain capable of attracting significant weight where they align with the National Planning Policy Framework in directing growth to the most sustainable locations. This is the case here.

- **Harm:** Departure from the development plan (CP57).
- **Weight:** Significant weight.

Design Quality and Local Character

The design of the proposed development fails to respond positively to the local context—through inappropriate height, scale, massing and layout resulting in harm to the character and appearance of the area and the street scene. The proposal does not meet the expectations of Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy or the design objectives of the NPPF.

- **Harm:** Poor design quality that fails to respect or enhance local distinctiveness.
- **Weight:** Substantial weight as good design is a key part of sustainable development

Impact on Amenity for Existing Occupants

The proposal gives rise to adverse effects on the amenity of existing occupants through overbearing built form.

- **Harm:** Impact on the amenity of the adjoining residents.
- **Weight:** Substantial weight.

Neutral Impacts

In assessing the overall planning balance, it is also important to identify those aspects of the development that are considered to be policy-compliant and acceptable, but which do not result in either a net benefit or harm. The following elements are afforded neutral weight in the planning balance, as they represent the baseline expectation for sustainable development in accordance with the development plan and national policy:

- *Highways impact*
- *Flood risk and drainage*

RECOMMENDATION:

That Planning Permission be REFUSED.