

APPLICATION FOR FULL-PLANNING PERMISSION CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/00354
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Chandlers Barn, Hilldrop Lane, Ramsbury, SN8 2HB
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Associated operational development to facilitate the change of use from agricultural building to flexible commercial use granted under PL/2025/08332
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve with Conditions

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The site is located in the open countryside outside of the Limits of Development of Ramsbury. It is accessed via a track that connects to Hilldrop Lane which runs into Ramsbury to the east. The building located on the site is currently in agricultural use. It is open-sided and currently appears to be used for feed/plant/machinery storage.

The proposal site and its surroundings lie within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (NWD) (formerly AONB). There are no other notable planning constraints pertaining to the site that must be considered as part of this application.

PROPOSAL

This proposal follows the granting of permission under Class R for Change of Use of an Agricultural Building to a flexible commercial use (C1 Hotels in this particular instance).

That original submission, ref: PL/2025/08322, initially showed building operations to facilitate the change of use but reference to those works and operational development were removed from that scheme.

This current submission now includes those works for such operational development under Class R.

The building would provide for 8 bedrooms, meetings rooms and dining facilities to enable the applicant to provide for corporate off-site meetings with overnight stays and other similar commercial enterprises.

Externally the building would comprise a double pitched roof clad in metal sheetwork, with horizontal timber cladding left untreated. The fenestration would be power coated metal casement windows with the rainwater good also in powder coated aluminium.

The original submission subject of this current proposal included a Red Line site plan which was contiguous with the land within the ownership of the applicant, i.e. that shown within the Blue Line area. An additional plan showing the Red Line area, confirms that the development is restricted to the building only and has excluded land around the building from the proposal. Any additional works would require separate submissions and assessment.

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
PL/2021/07132 - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 5/4/2022 – Associated operational development to facilitate the change of use from agricultural building to flexible commercial use granted under PL/2022/00367.
PL/2022/00367 - Prior approval Part 3 Class R: Agricultural buildings to a flexible commercial use Decision - Prior Approval Not Required Date: 10/3/2022 – Notification for Prior Approval under Class R for a Change of Use from Agricultural Building to a Flexible Commercial Use Specifically Office Use.
PL/2022/07368 - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 9/11/2022 – Amendment to roof following approval of Class R conversion (PL/2022/00367) to accommodate solar panels
PL/2025/08332 - Notification for Prior Approval under Class R for a Change of Use from Agricultural Building to a Flexible Commercial Use specifically Class C1 (hotels). Approved 18 December 2025

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Statutory Legislation:

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 3 Infrastructure Requirements;
- Core Policy 14 Spatial Strategy: Marlborough Community Area
- Core Policy 34 Additional Employment Land
- Core Policy 41 Sustainable Construction and Low-Carbon Energy;
- Core Policy 48 Supporting Rural Life

- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Core Policy 51 Landscape
- Core Policy 56 Contaminated Land
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 58 Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment;
- Core Policy 60 Sustainable Transport;
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development;
- Core Policy 62 Development Impacts on the Transport Network;
- Core Policy 64 Demand Management

Draft Wiltshire Local Plan Policies

At Full Council on 19 May 2026, the elected members of Wiltshire Council agreed to withdraw the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan. It will now be subject to a legal process to finalise its withdrawal - which is likely to happen in July or August (2026). The said Plan has no material weight for the purposes of the application.

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
- A Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Wiltshire: Wiltshire's Natural Environment Plan 2022-2030
- Wiltshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
 - Active travel infrastructure design standards 2022
 - Active travel parking standards and design guide 2022
- LTN1/20 – Cycle Infrastructure Design (July 2020)
- North Wessex Downs National Landscape Management Plan. 2025-2030

ISSUES

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

- 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 scheme would have an acceptable landscape impact (CP 51)
- 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 there would be any harmful impacts upon protected species or priority habitats (CP 50)
- Are there any other planning issues raised by the development?

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WC Highways: No Objection. The applicant has addressed concerns raised previously on the parent application.

WC Public Protection: Comment

A condition is recommended that in the event that contamination is found at any time, the Local Planning Authority shall be notified, works shall cease and remediation measures shall be submitted to and approved in writing.

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:

- A site notice displayed near the site

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

No letters of representation were received as a result of the public consultation

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.

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.

CP48 states that proposal to convert and re-use rural buildings for employment, tourism, cultural and community uses will be supported where;

1. The building(s) is/are structurally sound and capable of conversion without major rebuilding, and with only necessary extension or modification which preserves the character of the original building,
2. The use would not detract from the character or appearance of the landscape or settlement and would not be detrimental to the amenities of residential areas,
3. The building can be served by adequate access and infrastructure,
4. The site has reasonable access to local services.

The existing building is constructed with concrete posts, supporting a corrugated roof with timber boarding, enclosing the structure. It is sound and capable of conversion and the changes proposed have been carefully designed to retain the existing character. The building benefits from an existing suitable access and is a short distance away from the large village of Ramsbury, which offers a range of community facilities and services.

Furthermore, in this instance, the principle of development has already been agreed by the Local Planning Authority by way of the preceding application for Change of Use under Class R of the General Permitted Development Order, to that of Class C1 – Hotels, by way of PL/2025/08332.

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.

As previously reported, the building has already been granted Change of Use to that of Class C1 for use as a hotel.

The building sits within an isolated position and set topographically lower than the nearest adjacent highway, which is some distance to the south of the site. That highway does provide for long views of the barn, but due to the change in land levels and surrounding tree cover and woodlands adjacent to the site, it is nestled within the landscape and only seen against the backdrop of the higher hillside to the north and within the tree cover and only visible from the south and south-east of the site. There would also be some views from the north on the public right of way, PROW RAMS4, but again, the building would be seen against the backdrop of the rising land and tree cover.

The footprint of the building would not be enlarged and whilst the proposed elevations would result in a solid structure, the current views from the public realm are such that it already appears as a solid structure.

It is also considered that the proposed external material detailing, with the metal roofing and untreated timber boarding elevations are redolent of large, modern agricultural barns, that typically have Yorkshire Boarding to their elevations. Such buildings are not unusual in the rural landscape and the elevational changes to this existing structure are considered acceptable in this instance.

No Objections have been received from the Parish Council and subject to conditions to ensure that the development is undertaken and retained in accordance with the submitted plans, the proposal is considered to accord with the overarching principles set out in Core Policy 57 of the WCS, the Wiltshire Design Guide and the guidance and provision of the Framework.

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 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.

There are no nearby residential properties to the site, and as previously advised, the principle of the development for the change of use has already been considered acceptable by the Local Planning Authority. The fenestration layout would only provide long views across the valley and the impact of noise and disturbance has already been considered acceptable at the preceding Prior Approval stage.

The Council's Public Protection Officers have not raised any concerns in relation to noise but have recommended that a condition is appended to any grant of permission regarding the appropriate course of action should any land contamination be found during the construction

stage. Such a condition is considered appropriate and necessary to protect construction workers and potential future users of the facility and can be appended to any subsequent grant of permission.

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.

In terms of the sustainability of the location, given the principle of the change of use has already been granted by way of the Prior Approval process, it is not considered that a refusal on could be sustained on this element. Paragraph 116 of the Framework, also clarifies that development should only be refused on highway grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or where the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe.

The Council's Highway Engineers were consulted and there is no objection to the scheme. An Informative regarding the applicant's responsibilities for any works which affect the highway network can be appended to any grant of permission.

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.

The original submission proposed larger hard-surfaced car parking and terraced areas around the building, exceeding the 25 sq.m impact of development on existing natural habitat. The original scheme would therefore have been required to provide the statutory 10% biodiversity net gain. However, the applicant has submitted a revised site layout, reducing the proposed hard-surfaced areas.

The revised scheme is considered to fall within the “de minimus” exception to Biodiversity Net Gain but the onus is on the applicants/developers to confirm their compliance with this new legislation outside of planning as the legislation is deemed, regardless of any permissions granted. The site is also considered to comply with CP50 of the WCS as the very limited development of the site is not considered to remove any ecological features resulting in no net loss.

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 (formerly AONBs) 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 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.

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.

The site does fall within the boundaries of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and regard has been paid to the recently updated Management Plan of that rural asset.

In this instance, the design of the building is considered to sit comfortably within the site and setting. As previously advised, there are limited views from the public realm and the existing building is only visible in long views and would be seen against the backdrop of the adjacent woodlands and rising landscape. As such the impact upon the NL is considered acceptable in this instance.

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;

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

- The principle of development is considered acceptable when assessed against the settlement strategy of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.
- The proposal is broadly compliant with relevant local and national planning policies in respect of design, scale, residential amenity, landscape, highway safety, ecology and biodiversity, subject to the recommended conditions and any necessary mitigation measures.

The development would deliver clear benefits, including economic investment and rural regeneration which weigh positively in the overall planning balance.

No material considerations have been identified that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh these benefits or indicate that permission should be refused, having regard to the assessment above and the representations received

Accordingly, the proposal is considered acceptable in planning terms and in accordance with the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the National Planning Policy Framework, and all other relevant material considerations.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to the following conditions;

1. WA1 – Time

The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. WM13 – Plans

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents.

Application Form. Received on 19 January 2026

Planning Statement. Received on 19 January 2026

Proposed Location Plan. Received on 19 January 2026

Proposed Block Plan. Received on 23 June 2026

BB-01 Rev A. Proposed Floor Plans. Received on 19 January 2026

BB-02 Rev A. Proposed Elevations and Sections. Received on 19 January 2026

Access and Visibility Plan. Received on 19 January 2026

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. WB5 – Materials

The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be as stated in the documentation and on the plans hereby approved.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area.

4. Land Contamination

In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development, the Local Planning Authority shall be notified immediately. Development shall cease in the affected area and a written method statement detailing the nature of the contamination and the proposed remediation measures shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The remediation measures shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Following completion of the remediation, a verification report confirming that the site is suitable for its permitted use shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before development recommences in the affected area.

REASON: To ensure compliance with Core Policy 56 and to reduce the risks associated with land contamination

Informatives

The consent hereby granted shall not be construed as authority to carry out works on the highway. The applicant is advised that a licence will be required from Wiltshire's Highway Authority before any works are carried out on any footway, footpath, carriageway, verge or other land forming part of the highway.

Please contact our Vehicle Crossing Team on vehicleaccess@wiltshire.gov.uk and/or 01225 713352 or visit their website at <http://wiltshire.gov.uk/highways-streets> to make an application.

The applicant must also ensure that any works within 8m of a watercourse (including discharge to and/or piping of roadside ditches) will require full Land Drainage Consent . Please contact the Drainage Team at Drainage@wiltshire.gov.uk

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition (biodiversity gain condition) that development may not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan, if one is required in respect of this permission would be Wiltshire Council. There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. For further information on exempt developments please refer to:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because one or more of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements is considered to apply.