

18 June 2026

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Wiltshire Council,
Bythesea Road,
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Adrian,
PL/2026/00782 The erection of 8 dwellings and associated infrastructure.
Land at Sling Road, Bulford, Wiltshire, SP4 9AP

Our client's application for 8 dwellings was submitted at the beginning of February. Since that time, we have seen consultation responses from a series of consultees, some of whom have requested further information/clarification. As you will be aware, we have been working to provide that material, and this note provides an update of the current position and provides additional material/rebuttal in relation to the requests that we are aware of. On the basis of this material, we are hoping that we are able to move forward but would be happy to discuss with you on a call as necessary.

Consultee responses where no objection/comment received

The following consultees have confirmed their support for the application as submitted (subject to relevant conditions where appropriate):

- Bulford Parish Council
- Highways Department
- Arboricultural officer
- Housing Enabling Team

Site selection

As part of our discussions with officers, it has been requested that further information/clarification be provided as to the selection of the site at Sling Road for the development.

As set out in the Planning Statement submitted with the application, the proposals come as part of the wholesale review of homes for military families across the country. This comes following the purchase of 35,000 homes from Annington Homes in December 2024. Following this the Strategic Defence Review (SDR) and the Defence Housing Strategy provides the baseline for the review of all 45,000 homes that the Ministry of Defence (MoD) now own. As a result, the MoD are now embarked on setting up a new body, the Defence House Service (DHS) which will manage all aspects of service family accommodation (SFA) for the future.

A project is underway to review all homes across the country and to do so 62 Zones have been identified, which reflect the practical operational areas within which service personnel operate and therefore within which they should live. The project is reviewing the character, condition and location of all homes, to fit them against the emerging needs of the military following the implementation of the SDR and also in the light of policy changes within the MoD which mean that increased numbers of families will be eligible for family housing.

As part of the review of SFA it will be necessary to build a significant number of new homes across the country, and the MoD are developing house types which reflect the needs of service families. The homes subject of the application will be the first of these model homes, which will enable the house types to be delivered and tested by real families.

As such, sites across the estate have been considered. Salisbury Plain East is a major zone within the wider defence estate, being the location for 5,500 homes and the potential for a number more as part of the emerging changes. It is also well connected to the wider establishments in the region, therefore a site in Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA) East was identified as practically the most desirable for the model homes to be delivered.

Within the zone the MoD owns a large estate. However, a majority is training estate, which is utilised consistently and is not available for the delivery of housing. In addition, much of this land is within key environmental designations such as SSSI, SPA and SAC. Therefore, this limits the area of search to land outside of the training estate and ideally free from major designations.

The current MoD policy is to deliver all SFA outside of security fences wherever possible. This therefore focused the areas of search outside of existing establishments, but within close proximity to them as places of work, and access to facilities, notably health and education.

Finally, the search sought to identify distinct parcels of land, which would be self-contained, and not necessarily part of wider sites, where questions regarding later phases of development might be required to be resolved.

As set out in the original Planning Statement, it is not appropriate for the MoD to identify specific sites within their ownership in the public domain. However, sites across the eastern end of Salisbury Plain were considered and generally discounted.

The site at Sling Road was identified through this process. The key criteria for this selection were:

- Available land outside of the training estate
- Land outside of any security fence
- Land not within an ecological or landscape designation such as SSI, SPA or SAC
- Land not directly impacted by heritage designations such as World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument or Listed Buildings
- Land within close proximity of existing Service Family Homes
- Land within close proximity of a range of services including medical centre, school and shops
- Land with access to public transport links
- Land previously developed for military use
- Existing infrastructure connections within the vicinity with capacity to accommodate new development.

As a result of this sieving process the site was selected as it is outside of security wire, within close proximity to services and facilities and was formally developed as part of a barracks. It is located in close proximity to other homes and is, in the context of Salisbury Plain East, unconstrained by ecological or heritage designations. It is also a clearly defined self-contained parcel within an area which is being considered for more significant SFA development.

We trust that this provides sufficient background to the site selection process.

Archaeology

The Council's archaeology officer advised (24th February) that further information on the impact on buried archaeological heritage was required in order for the application to be determined.

In response, a Gradiometer and Ground Penetrating Radar Survey was undertaken, and the Report was shared with the Council on 6th May and uploaded to the planning register the same day. The findings of the survey did not indicate any items of interest but did confirm the disturbance of the land due to the previous development of the site as a barracks.

We believe that, given the previous disturbance of the land to depths likely for domestic foundations, that there is little purpose in undertaking trial trenching of the site prior to determination of the application. It is our belief that a watching brief during development of the site would be sufficient in this instance to assess and protect potential assets. We understand that the council's archaeologist has been consulted on this approach (13th May) but has not, as yet, provided any response.

It would be appreciated if this could be followed up with your colleague and confirmation of the approach agreed.

Heritage Impact

In response to the application, Historic England raised concerns (20th March) regarding potential impacts on the setting of the bowl barrow scheduled monument which is located to the east of the development site. In response to that concern, the Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment (HEDBA) was shared with Historic England on 24th March. This assessment illustrated that the potential impacts had been thoroughly considered and assessed, and the impacts adjudged to be "less than substantial harm".

We understand that Historic England have not objected to this assessment of the impact, nor have they formally objected to the application. They have simply identified concerns and suggested moving the proposed homes to the west would be of benefit. However, having reviewed these comments, it remains our contention that the impact of the proposals on the heritage asset are limited to "less than substantial" and that moving the homes west would have a negative impact on other important aspects, not least the loss of trees within this wider site.

Therefore, on the basis of the agreed assessment of the impact of the proposals, and the impacts of relocating the homes, we have concluded that any change would result in negative impacts outweighing the positive impact of increased distance from the barrows. It is therefore our intention not to change the location of the homes.

Ecology

It was accepted at the outset that additional species-specific surveys would be required to be undertaken to support the application. As we have previously indicated, these have been ongoing and are now nearing completion.

A GCN eDNA survey confirmed the absence of newts in a nearby pond, whilst a full season of reptile surveys have now been completed and again confirmed absence. Similarly stone curlew surveys to date have confirmed absence with the final survey to be undertaken in early July.

The full survey results and updated reporting will be shared once received, including a HRA Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment and SSSI assessment following the completion of stone curlew surveys, and the final EcIA. It is projected that these reports will be completed in July. This reporting will also include an update to the BNG Report following the recommendation within the January 2026 report to resurvey in the optimal habitat season to refresh the botanical data and enhance accuracy.

Drainage

An outline drainage strategy was submitted with the application, which proposed infiltration for surface water discharge based on known ground conditions.

The drainage officer in their response provided a holding objection, seeking further information, notably relating to soakage tests, which were proposed to be undertaken. These tests remain pending and a planning condition is requested to allow determination and planning certainty.

This conditional response is considered low risk for the Council as the MoD has alternative drainage options and control the land surrounding the site. For example, if infiltration testing demonstrates an alternative drainage solution is required the MoD can lay a new surface water network within their land west to the nearby watercourse, or south to the nearby MoD or Wessex Water networks.

Therefore, we consider that a condition requiring further detailed assessment prior to commencement would be appropriate in this instance.

Next steps

As previously discussed, it would be very useful if we could have a conversation with you about this material, the application and progress towards a decision.

If you could suggest some dates for a call, we can set up a date so that it is in the diary.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Chris Dadds

Director – Planning

For and on behalf of

Jones Lang LaSalle Limited