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Our Ref: DC/LJ/25035
Your Ref:

Mr Richard Hughes
Planning Team Leader – South
Wiltshire Council
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
BA14 8JN

14 July 2026

Dear Mr Hughes

Re: Construction of 2 no. affordable dwellings with associated access and parking area on Land at Top Lane, Stourton, BA12 6QA

I am instructed by the Stourhead (Western) Estate to lodge a Full application for the above development.

The application is submitted electronically via the Planning Portal and comprises the following documents:

- Full application for planning permission forms
- Drawing 25035-1A – Existing Site Survey at 1:100 scale
- Drawing 25035-2 – Location Plan at 1:1250 scale and proposed Site Layout at 1:200 scale and Floor Plans and Elevations for Sheds/Stores at 1:100 scale
- Drawing 25035-3A – Proposed Plans, Elevations and Sections at 1:100 scale
- Stourton with Gaspar Parish Housing Needs Survey - December 2018
- Stourhead (Western) Estate – Allocation Policy for Affordable Houses
- Flood Risk Assessment 30/03/2026 - Calibro Consultants Ltd
- Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Metric – Vikki Gallagher (Independent Environmental Consultant), sub-consulted through D & H Pengelly Partnership
- Ecological Impact Assessment by Lily Gilbert BSc (Hons) MCIEEM
- Planning Statement incorporating Design and Access Statement and Statement of Significance
- CIL Form 1 (Additional Information)
- Draft Section 106 Agreement

The application fee of [REDACTED] processing charge has been paid to the Planning Portal.

P D M Carpendale MA DIP (Arch Cons) MRTPI IHBC **R Campbell** RIBA ARB MA Arch Dip Arch **M Williams** DipTP MRTPI

Mrs J Montgomery BSc (Hons) MRICS MRTPI

Detailed justification for the proposal is set out below addressing the description of the proposal, planning policy considerations, heritage and design and access requirements:

Proposal and planning history

The application proposes the provision of two accessible (single storey) affordable dwellings on land owned by the Stourhead (Western) Estate at Top Lane situated between Stourton and Gasper.

Planning approval was granted for a small development of four affordable dwellings at Gasper in 2015 (13/00636/FUL). This permission was subject to a S.106 Agreement requiring the approved dwellings to remain as affordable housing and to be occupied in accordance with an agreed allocations policy and procedure. All four properties are let to persons with a defined local connection at an affordable rent.

A more recent application to construct four affordable dwellings at Bonham Farm was supported by the Southern Area Planning Committee. However, before the planning approval could be issued (as it was subject to a proposed S.106 Agreement to control the affordable housing) the proposal was subject to legal challenge by a neighbour, following which Wiltshire Council conceded it had not fully justified the reasoning for approving the application contrary to objection from Historic England and its Conservation Officer.

Rather than proceed with the submission of a further application, the applicants decided to no longer pursue development on that site.

Need for affordable housing

The Estate is keen to meet further demand for those living or working in the Parish, who are unable to afford to buy a home in the village and do not already own any residential property. The scheme is designed as a pair of single storey dwellings in a barn style and will be for affordable rent to local people (as was the Brook Cottages' development at Gasper). It will comprise two single-storey 2-bedroom houses built to Level 2 Accessibility Standards. Priority will be given to local people currently in need of ground floor accommodation and older people who may need such accommodation to enable them to stay in the village as long as possible.

The submission follows the completion of a Parish Housing Needs Survey, which identified that the need was predominantly for 2 bed accommodation with the equal joint preference (in terms of type of home) being for bungalows and terraced accommodation.

The survey recognised the low level of turnover of social housing within the Parish, such that the households identified as being at need could not have this met through existing social housing in the Parish. It identified a minimum need for six units of accommodation, five of which should be for affordable rent. This identified the need as comprising:

- 3 X 1 bedroom homes (1 X bungalow/ground floor accommodation)
- 1 X 2 bedroom home
- 1 X 3 bedroom home

The application is accompanied by an Allocation Policy which will form part of the S.106 Agreement which the applicants agree should be imposed to control the tenure and occupancy of the development in perpetuity.

Design and layout

The proposed site layout plan (see drawing 25035-2) shows how a simple barn style building – to comprise two units of accommodation – can be provided on site. The proposal shows a building with vernacular proportions – rectangular plan form with narrow gables - set back a short distance from Top Lane. The proposal is for the building to have a low brick plinth with horizontal timber boarded elevations above, under a plain tiled roof incorporating solar panels on the south side.

Windows and doors are to be powder-coated aluminium (dark grey) to match with the timber boarding once it has weathered to a natural colour.

The development is served by a new access positioned to the west side of the development leading onto turning and parking areas to the rear of the building.

The proposal incorporates landscaped/planted areas both to integrate the development into its immediate surroundings, but also to provide the required biodiversity net gain (BNG) on-site.

Impact on Heritage Assets (Statement of Significance)

There is a Grade II Listed house (No.59) approximately 60m to the south-west which remains within the ownership of the Estate (applicant). It is most likely to comprise a former farmhouse or farm worker's accommodation associated with the Estate. The Heritage Asset will not be physically affected by the proposal. However, the setting of the building and whether this is impacted by development is a material consideration and a matter that should be assessed when considering the proposal.

This house sits within substantial surrounding garden land, beyond which there is agricultural land including a field on the north side of Top Lane which will not be altered within proximity of the building. The house and land remain within the ownership/control of the applicant.

There is no adverse impact upon the setting of this building and, as such, the proposal does not result in any harm to significance. Even if the LPA should assess that less than substantial harm does result at a low level, the public benefits of providing affordable housing should be considered in the planning balance as outweighing such harm.

Planning Policy

Stourton is identified as a Small Village within the Wiltshire Core Strategy (which was adopted after approval of the Gasper scheme). Core Policy 44 (which deals with rural exception sites) sets out that:

At settlements defined as Local Service Centres, Large and Small Villages (Core Policy 1), and those not identified within the settlement strategy, a proactive approach to the provision of affordable housing will be sought in conjunction with parish councils and working with local communities and other parties.

The policy allows housing for local need to be permitted, solely for affordable housing, provided:

- (i) The proposal has clear support from the local community.
- (ii) The housing is being delivered to meet an identified and genuine local need.
- (iii) The proposal is within, adjoining or well-related to the existing settlement.
- (iv) Environmental and landscape considerations will not be compromised.
- (v) The proposal consists of 10 dwellings or fewer.

- (vi) The employment and services are accessible from the site.
- (vii) Its scale and type is appropriate to the nature of the settlement and will respect the character and setting of that settlement.
- (viii) The affordable housing provided under this policy will always be available for defined local needs, both initially and on subsequent change of occupant.

Core Policy 51 (Landscape) requires development to protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character.

The site is situated within the National Landscape (AONB) as is most of the village. However, it is located immediately beyond an existing property owned by the Estate and located along a lane characterised by small numbers of dwellings – sometimes grouped together.

The proposal will satisfy the requirements of Core Policy 57 (Ensuring High-Quality Design and Place-Shaping) and Core Policy 58 (Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment).

Whilst the proposal satisfies the requirements of Core Policy 44 dealing with rural exception sites, it should be noted in a general planning context that Wiltshire Council has a substantial shortfall in housing land supply with this currently being recognised as being only 2.44 years. Additionally, the LPA has just had to withdraw its emerging (new) Wiltshire Local Plan and will shortly be starting the Local Plan process afresh.

In such circumstances, the presumption in favour of sustainable development (see para 11(d) of the NPPF) is relevant on the basis that no assets of importance (including the National Landscape or heritage assets) are adversely affected. In such circumstances, the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be applied and form part of the material considerations that weigh in favour of the proposal.

Although the site is not within Stourton itself, the Parish comprises several clusters of development including at Gasper, Bonham and along Top Lane. The site is reasonably accessible and there are footpath connections providing an alternative means of access to other facilities within the village.

Stourton is also within a short and safe cycling distance from the site.

Conclusion

I am sure the LPA will wish to applaud the applicant's continuing commitment to providing additional affordable housing to be controlled by the Estate to meet the needs of local workers and residents who are unable to purchase their own homes or rent at full market rent.

The permission granted in 2015, precedes Stourton being identified as a Small Village and the advent of Core Policy 41 which does permit (on an exceptional basis) housing of this type to be permitted in such locations to serve an identified local need.

I trust the LPA will recommend the application for approval within the statutory 8-week period.

Should you require any further information, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

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Mr Diccon Carpendale MA DIP (Arch Cons) MRTPI IHBC

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