



Poulsom Architectural Design and Planning Services

29 July 2026

Development Management
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

Dear Isobella,

Additional comments for planning application: PL/2026/03357

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Parish Council's concerns. While the Neighbourhood Plan would only have been made if it complied with the requirements of both the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework, I would like to offer the following additional comments.

Policy 1 of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) relates to sustainable design and construction. In particular, proposals should demonstrate how they have mitigated and adapted to the impacts of climate change.

Criterion (c) of the policy requires developments to demonstrate good connections to existing services and facilities, thereby minimising the need to travel by private car. The approval of the outline planning permission (reference: PL/2025/00965) confirms that the principle of development has already been accepted as compliant with national and local planning policy, including its sustainability credentials.

Furthermore, amendments to the Building Regulations that came into force in 2026, specifically Approved Document L (Conservation of Fuel and Power), require all new developments to achieve a high standard of energy efficiency. Compliance is demonstrated following planning approval through SAP calculations and other technical information. The updated regulations also require new dwellings to be fitted with ultra-low emission vehicle ULEV charging points. Accordingly, from a sustainability perspective, the proposed development complies with Policies 1 and 4 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy 13 requires all qualifying developments to deliver a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). This requirement is established through the Environment Act 2021 and has applied to developments of this scale since 2 April 2024. The outline planning application did not receive any ecological objections in relation to BNG, and a similar response is anticipated for the current reserved matters application.

In relation to the Parish Council's comments regarding the historic agricultural complex of the former Home Farm farmyard, the Neighbourhood Plan does not identify either Home Farm or the farmyard as a "noteworthy stone building" or an "important area of local heritage", as

defined on page 19 of the Melksham Design Guidelines and Codes. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the farmyard is not considered to hold particular historic significance, even from a local heritage perspective.

Pages 45 and 46 of the Design Guide set out the expectations for high-quality design in new development. They state that new development should be of a high standard, reflect the local vernacular, and respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing, while preserving views towards the open countryside and from the countryside towards the rural settlement.

Design considerations are addressed in Section 3.3 of the Planning Statement submitted in support of the application. As explained within that section, the proposal takes its design cues from the existing farmyard setting, with the new buildings adopting a contemporary agricultural appearance through the use of a mixed palette of materials already found on the site or within the surrounding area. The scale and massing have been carefully considered, with the increased floor area achieved by increasing the depth of the buildings rather than their width, as the existing barns already possess a substantial footprint. The proposed dwellings also retain the perpendicular orientation of the existing barns they are intended to replace. Consequently, when viewed from the surrounding countryside, the buildings will continue to read as agricultural barns while accommodating the additional scale and mass required by the client.

There are no policies within the Neighbourhood Plan that restrict the construction of dwellings of this scale. Furthermore, the external materials can be secured by condition prior to installation should the Case Officer consider this necessary.

I trust the above provides sufficient additional context to address the concerns raised by the Parish Council and demonstrates that the proposal complies with all relevant national and local planning policies, such that planning permission should be granted without delay.

Yours sincerely

Amy Poulson MRTPI, MSc, BSc (Hons)

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