

APPLICATION FOR HOUSEHOLDER PLANNING PERMISSION DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/02944
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Fairfield Farm College, High Street, Dilton Marsh, Westbury, BA13 4DL
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Proposed alterations to fenestration and roof and wall cladding to existing engineering building.
RECOMMENDATION:	That Planning Permission be GRANTED

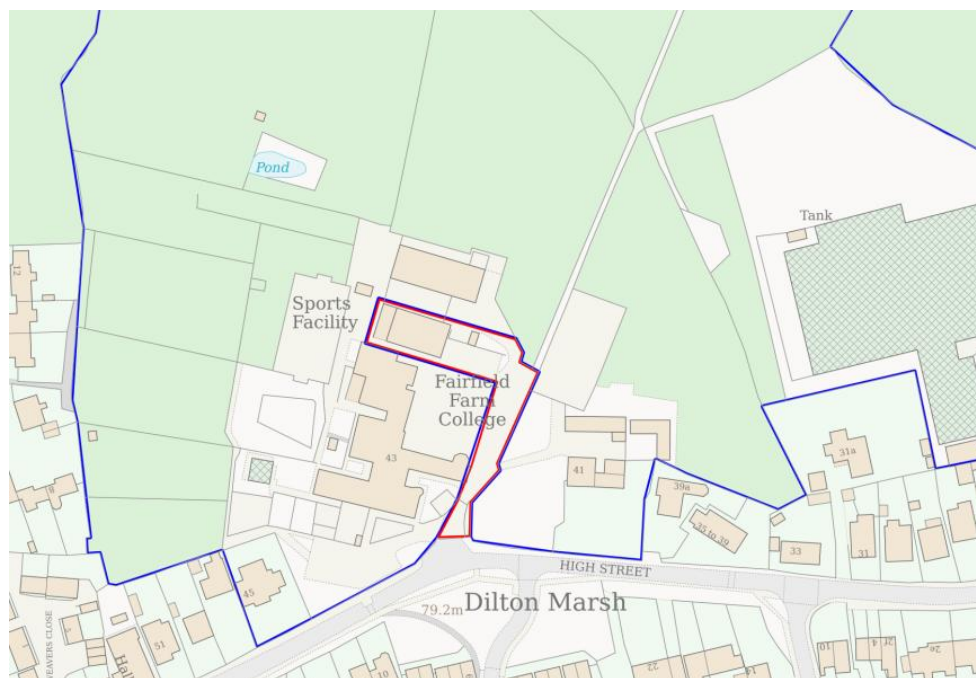
PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks planning permission for alterations to the existing fenestration with a replacement insulated roof, replacement roof windows and installation of wood clad elevations on an existing engineering building that forms part of Fairfield Farm College. Some internal reconfiguration of the building would also be undertaken.

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The proposal relates to a site at Fairfield College, located in Dilton Marsh, near Westbury, a specialist further education college for young people. The application site is accessed off the main route through the village and lies within a number of outbuildings on site that serve the educational facility. A number of public rights of way lie within the vicinity of the application site.

The area sits within the Bath and Bradford on Avon Special Area of Conservation for bats and within the yellow zone of the Trowbridge and Westbury Bat Mitigation Strategy (TWBMS) and the recreational impact zone of the Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area for birds.



PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
W/12/02153/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 11/4/2013 – Two new buildings; a new single storey teaching, office and conference facilities building and a new agricultural building.
17/09970/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 10/10/2018 – New 63 x 21m indoor horse arena with viewing area and WC and kitchen facilities, 11no. horse loose boxes, 20 x 40m external horse arena, lean to farm store, carpark for 66 cars and 10 minibuses/horse trailers, enlarged drainage pond, extended access road.

RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Wiltshire Core Strategy:

Core Policy 32 – Spatial Strategy for the Westbury Community Area

Core Policy 41 - Sustainable Construction and Low Carbon Energy

Core Policy 50 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Core Policy 57 - Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping

Core Policy 58 - Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment

Emerging Wiltshire Local Plan

At Full Council on 19 May 2026, the elected members of Wiltshire Council agreed to withdraw the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan. The said Plan has no material weight for the purposes of the application.

In accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, on 30th June 2026 Wiltshire Council published a notice of intention to prepare a new local plan for Wiltshire. The next stage is a Scoping Consultation which commences on 2nd September 2026. This plan is at a very early stage and currently carries no weight for decision making.

Wiltshire Design Guide: Appendix D – Design Guidance for Householder extensions

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The Planning Practice Guidance

National Design Guide

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Dilton Marsh Parish Council: No comments received

Wiltshire Council Ecologist: No objections

REPRESENTATIONS

No comments were received.

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 adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and, where applicable, any made Neighbourhood Plans.

Heritage, Design and Impact upon the character and context of the area

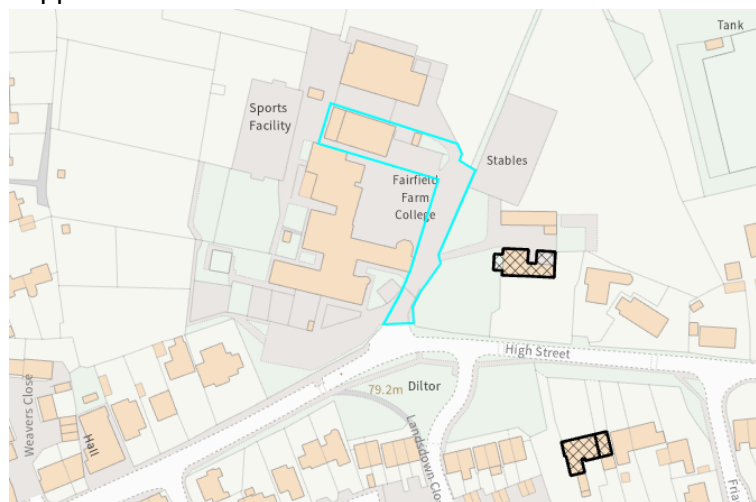
From the point of view of the historic environment the main statutory tests are set out within the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The Council's Core Strategy Policy CP58 'Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment' requires that designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance and encourages proposals which improve the condition of heritage assets at risk.

The Council's Core Strategy CP 57: Ensuring high quality design requires a high quality of design in all new developments. The policy requires applicants to "demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through (amongst other things) responding to the value of the natural and historic environment and being sympathetic to and conserving historic buildings and landscapes. Development is required to respond positively to the existing in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting.

The NPPF outlines government policy for planning. Chapter 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development.

The application site lies within the main settlement area of Dilton Marsh and within the vicinity of the building lie two listed buildings. Therefore, any works to the host building have to be appraised in relation to any impact upon the immediate setting of these buildings as well as the character and appearance of the area.



Listed buildings (hatched black)

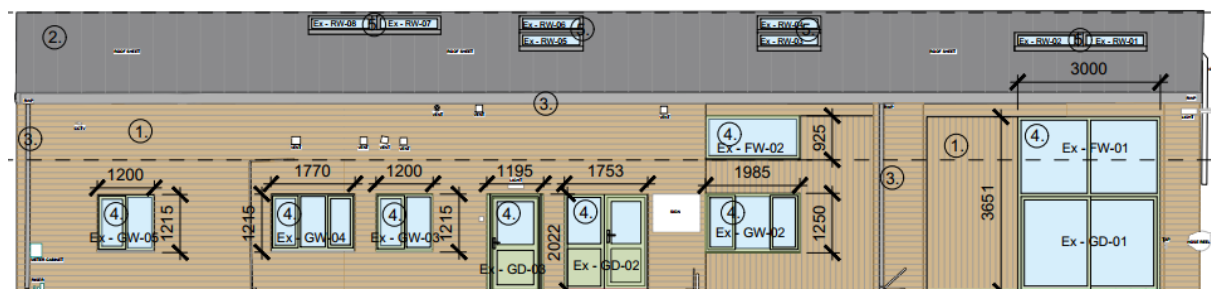
The proposal relates to changes to the existing fenestration arrangement on three elevations, with replacement roof windows, replacement roof that would be insulated, replacement roof windows and timber clad elevations.

On the north elevation two first floor windows would be inserted, the east elevation would have a pedestrian door removed, the south elevation would introduce additional windows at ground and first floor with the existing full eight garage doors removed with replacement full height glazed panels and the west elevation would remain as existing. The fenestration would consist of sage green aluminium windows, and wooden cladding would be applied to all elevations.

The proposal would involve a replacement roof which would consist of dark grey insulated metal sandwich panels, typical to the development type.



Existing south elevation



Proposed south elevation

The use of appropriate materials would ensure the proposal would integrate into the existing built form within the surrounding setting and existing street scene. The scale of the development is commensurate to the size of the generous application site and the proposal by virtue of its design, and use of materials, is considered to preserve the setting of the listed buildings nearby.

Officers consider that it would not result in harm to the significance of any heritage assets, the development is therefore considered to comply with Core Policies 57 and 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

Having regard to the above, the proposal complies with the design principles set out in Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Appendix D of the Wiltshire Design Guide.

Amenity

Point vii of Core Policy 57 - Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that developments do not adversely affect neighbouring properties.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly Paragraph 135(f), stresses that planning decisions should ensure developments provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

The proposed development has been assessed in terms of its potential impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties, with particular regard to loss of light, overshadowing, loss of privacy, and overbearing effects.

The host building is located within an existing educational setting with extended separation distances to neighbouring occupiers. Therefore, given the nature of the proposed works, officers raise no objections to the scheme in terms of any potential adverse overlooking to neighbouring occupiers, or any overshadowing or overbearing impacts or loss of light.

The proposal therefore accords with Core Policy 57 point vii in respect of safeguarding residential amenity and Appendix D of the Wiltshire Design Guide.

Ecology Impact

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, including through ensuring that development avoids harm to protected species and habitats.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in Paragraphs 193, requires that development minimises impacts on and provides net gains for biodiversity, including ensuring mitigation is secured where harm cannot be avoided.

The application site sits within the Bath and Bradford on Avon Special Area of Conservation for bats and within the yellow zone of the Trowbridge and Westbury Bat Mitigation Strategy (TWBMS) and as this application involves disturbance to the existing roof due consideration has to be given to the potential disturbance of any bats because of the proposed development.

The Council's Ecology team were consulted on the proposal and offered the following comments

"No protected species surveys have been submitted to support this application. However, online satellite and street view imagery shows that the building is of modern construction. From the exterior the walls are of cement block construction and are in good condition with no gaps or cracks. Additionally, the pitched roof and soffits appear to be constructed from single-sheet cement board and other thin sheet materials (possibly metal or plastic). Therefore, there appears to be limited external roosting opportunities for bats. The eastern half of the building is a garage workshop, and the western half of the building consists of two floors of workshops, classrooms, offices and storage. Most of these internal spaces appear to be well lit and are subject to regular activity indicating limited internal roosting opportunities.

Based on the information available, there is a low risk that bats may occur at the development site. Bat roosts are protected all times by the Conservation of Habitats and Species 2017 (as

amended) even when bats are temporarily absent. Planning permission for development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation or substitute for the need to obtain a bat licence if an offence is likely. If bats or evidence of bats is found during the works, the applicant is advised to stop work and follow advice from an independent ecologist or the applicant is advised to follow the advice of a professional ecologist or to contact Natural England's Batline through the internet.

The application proposes no additional external lighting. However, increasing percentage cover of fenestration on both the roof and elevations will increase the upward and outward component of internal light spill (see TWBMS section below).

New wooden panelling could create opportunities that benefit crevice dwelling bats. These can be built into the cladding by allowing gaps and they may form naturally due to weathering of the wood. Otherwise, bat boxes can be added as enhancement.

General

No additional external lighting is proposed. However, because the site lies at the edge of a rural area, a condition will be applied to ensure that any future lighting installed is appropriately designed and controlled in the interest of biodiversity.

Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

TWBMS

The application site is located within the yellow medium risk zone of the Trowbridge & Westbury Bat Mitigation Strategy (TWBMS). The application must therefore be considered under the Habitats Regulations. The yellow medium risk zone represents the areas where habitat has been shown to be of importance, or is highly likely to be of importance for bats associated with the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bat SAC, and in particular the yellow zone takes into consideration the foraging areas and flightlines of horseshoe species and Bechstein's bats and is anticipated to be able to accept a degree of development pressure provided applications are designed in accordance with the principles in the TBMS. Impacts will arise on individual sites and in-combination with other sites because of loss and/degradation of habitat of importance to the qualifying bats.

The proposal results in no habitat loss, fragmentation, or recreational pressure, and no external lighting is included. Although increased fenestration may raise internal light spill, the site already experiences baseline illumination from its existing use. The campus lies at the edge of a residential area and lacks commuting or foraging features, so any marginal increase in internal light spill is unlikely to cause disturbance. As the building will predominantly function as classrooms, internal lighting will rarely operate during peak bat activity. Overall, no significant disturbance above existing levels is expected.

A test of likely significance has been carried out by the relevant Competent Authority (Wiltshire Council) as required by Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). This concluded that given the scale and nature of the development, there is no mechanism for adverse effect. The HRA has concluded that the application is not likely to have significant impacts on the SAC and subsequently the application is screened out of Appropriate Assessment

Compliance with CP50 (no net loss etc)

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires all development to demonstrate no net loss of biodiversity and to seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity. The NPPF also encourages applications to deliver measurable net gains (para 193d).

Application of wooden panelling could create opportunities that benefit crevice dwelling bats by providing roosting places. These can be built into the cladding by allowing gaps. Otherwise, bat and/or bird boxes can be added as enhancement. A standard enhancement condition should be applied”

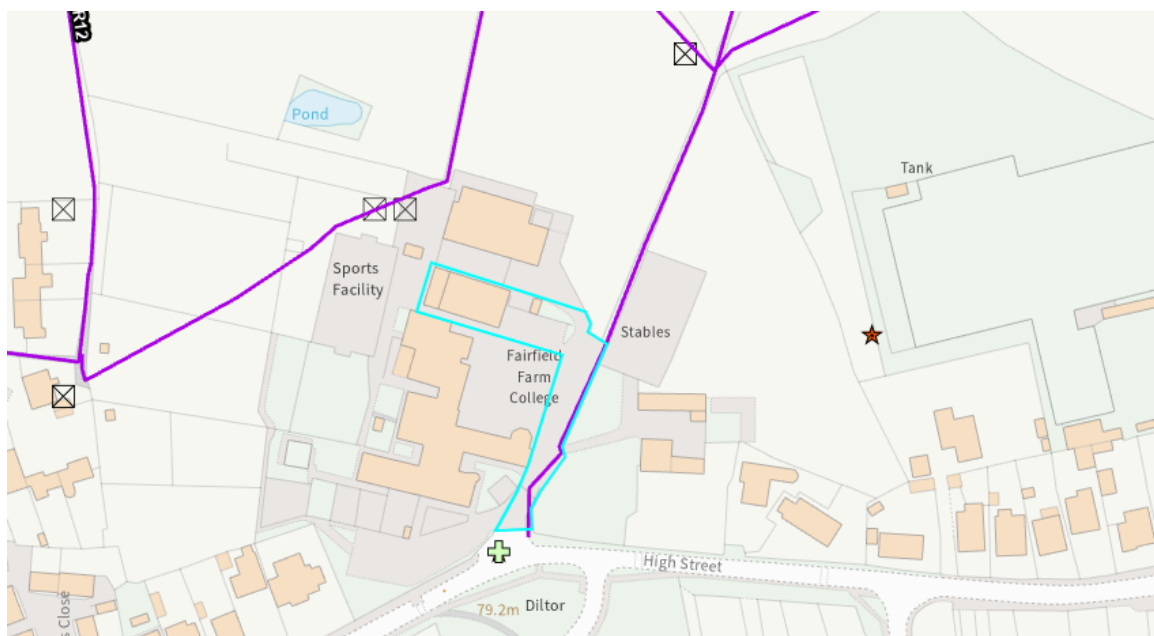
This proposal also falls within the recreational impact zone of the Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area for birds. Therefore, potential disturbance to nesting birds through the creation of additional visitor numbers to the Salisbury Plain has to be assessed. However, given that this proposal relates to changes in fenestration detail and a replacement roof on an existing outbuilding without the creation of separate independent living accommodation, it is considered that there would not be any adverse impacts on the Special Protection Area.

The Ecology team have recommended a couple of suitably worded conditions be added to ensure that measures are put in place for mitigation and enhancement for biodiversity and that any outdoor lighting provided should minimize impacts on biodiversity caused by light spillage to areas above and outside the development site.

Given the proposal seeks small scale works to an existing building, without any increase in footprint, with limited disruption to any biodiversity with no net loss identified, no concerns are raised in relation to any adverse ecological impacts to be introduced by the proposed scheme. The proposal therefore meets the requirements contained in policy CP50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

Impact on the Public Right of Way

To the north, east and west of the application site lie a couple of public rights of way, as shown on the map insert below. The footpaths run from the village to access a network of footpaths across the surrounding countryside. Therefore, due consideration has to be given to any potential disruption to the enjoyment of users of these footpaths by the proposal.



Given the small-scale nature of the works, alterations to the existing fenestration and replacement roof, the public rights of way would not be altered by any of the works, with the existing building set back a distance from the footpaths.

Therefore, officers do not raise any objections on the basis that there would not be any open views of surrounding countryside that would be obstructed by the proposal and the proposed development would not have a detrimental effect to users of the public footpaths.

Biodiversity Net Gain

As of April 2024, unless exempted, applications need to demonstrate no net loss and a minimum of 10% net gain in biodiversity (BNG) on the site, in line with the requirements of the NPPF, PPG, WCS policy CP50 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) and the Environment Act. In this case, the application was submitted with a de minimis exemption.

However, the small-scale nature of this proposal means that the scheme falls within De minimis Exemption (less than 25sqm of habitat or 5m of linear habitat) and therefore BNG is not required.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development is acceptable in terms of its design, scale, and relationship with the surrounding area. It would not result in any unacceptable harm to the character of the locality, the amenities of neighbouring occupiers, or the interests of heritage, or ecology.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the Wiltshire Local Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework. As such, the application is recommended for approval, subject to the conditions set out below.

RECOMMENDATION: That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to conditions.