

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

5 August 2026

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Application No: PL/2025/06396
Demolition of existing dwelling, erection of two detached dwellings and associated works.
Marshfield, 85 High Street, Great Cheverell, Devizes, SN10 5XR

Please find following comments in respect of the above application(s).

Recommendations:

☐	No comment
☐	Support in principle subject to amendments to the scheme (as set out below)
☐	Support subject to conditions (as set out below)
☒	Object (for reasons set out below)
☐	No objections

Scope of comments: the following comments relate to the built historic environment.

These comments are in addition to the previous comments and undertaken by a different Conservation Officer. These comments should be read in conjunction with the previous comments.

National Policy and guidance: 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. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 also requires the Council to pay **special attention** to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of designated Conservation Areas.

The NPPF outlines government policy, including its policy in respect of the historic environment. Section 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development. Paragraphs 214-16 of the NPPF require a balanced approach with any harm which would be caused being weighed against the potential public benefits which might be achieved. Paragraph 210 requires local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

National Planning Practice Guidance provides guidance on interpreting the NPPF.

Historic England Advice Note 2 – Making changes to Heritage Assets illustrates the application of policies set out in the NPPF in determining applications for PP and LBC.

Historic England's "Conservation Principles" provides policy and guidance for the "sustainable management of the historic environment". Additional guidance is also contained within their publications:

- Historic Environment Good Practice Planning Advice Note 2 – Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (2015)
- Historic Environment Good Practice Planning Advice Note 3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd edition)

The following points are taken from the Historic England document "The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 3" (HE GPA3) that are considered to be particularly relevant:

HE GPA3 Part 1:

"The NPPF makes it clear that the setting of a heritage asset is the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset."

"The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. ...views of or from an asset will play an important part..."

"While setting can be mapped in the context of an individual application or proposal, it cannot be definitively and permanently described for all time as a spatially bounded area or as lying within a set distance of a heritage asset. This is because the surroundings of a heritage asset will change over time."

"The importance lies in what the setting contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or to the ability to appreciate that significance."

Other HE publications

HE GPAs and HEANs [The Planning System | Historic England](#)

Local Policy: The Council's Core Strategy Policy CP58 'Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment' requires that "designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance." It is also required that distinctive elements of Wiltshire's historic environment, including non-designated heritage assets, which contribute to a sense of local character and identity will be conserved, and where possible enhanced.

The Council's Core Strategy CP 57: Ensuring high quality design requires a high quality of design in all new developments. Proposals are required to "demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through (amongst other things) "enhancing local distinctiveness by responding to the value of the natural and historic environment, relating positively to its landscape setting and the existing pattern of development" and "responding positively to the existing townscape and landscape features 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."

Proposal: The proposed scheme looks to demolish the existing dwelling and create two new dwellings, with new access route and hard landscaping, including extensive ground works (retaining walls formed by gabion baskets) due to the topology of the site and surround area.

Relevant planning history: refer to previous comments.

Issues: impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings, impact on the conservation area.

Information considered/provided: Paragraph 207 requires that applicants describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. This should include sufficient information to provide a clear understanding of the significance of the heritage asset and its setting and the potential impact of any proposals on that significance.

In this case, the applications are accompanied by a “Heritage Impact Assessment” recognises the setting of the listed building and focuses on the earthen bank of an Early Modern/ Medieval sunken lane but provides sufficient information to understand the impact of the proposals and is proportionate to their scope. The requirements of the NPPF are therefore met in this respect.

The submitted report concludes that the works would result in ‘less than substantial harm’ to the setting of the listed building through the loss of the bank material and change of views (para.11.6) and to the sunken lane (para.2.3). The creation of off-street parking is considered to be a benefit (para.12.4).

The report refers to the acceptance of the proposed development by the Conservation Officer (PL/2022/09110) for the development of two high-quality dwellings, however, the advice available on this application does not concur with this consideration as there has been a consistent recommendation for refusal of the scheme. The Conservation Officer’s advice advises that the design ‘would be unduly urban’ and have a ‘detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the street scene’, concluding that ‘greater emphasis needs to be given to the design of the residential units since this needs to knit back the enclosure of the street scene with buildings of a positive contribution which are of high quality and contribute to a sense of place.’ This scheme offered a small dual access drive with parking to the rear, and two different plots, a more linear Plot 1 and an oblong Plot 2 but retained a larger amount of open space and natural landscaping and is considered to be a less intrusive scheme than the current scheme.

However, paragraph 208 also provides for the local planning authority to make its own assessment of impact and the following heritage recommendations are offered on this basis.

Significance of assets and contribution of setting (as appropriate): The NPPF defines significance as the “value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be **archaeological, architectural, artistic** or **historic**. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.” Historic England assesses significance in a similar manner, referring to evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values of a place.

The interest may be architectural, or historic as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 S 1.

The property lies within the Great Cheverell Conservation Area, a linear village, approximately 4.25 miles long that follows the spring line and contours of the northeast facing hillside. The historic core of the village is focused on the junction of the High Street and Church Road. Much of the rural character remains in the village as it is not a main route and still enjoys wide views of the surrounding agricultural landscape. The C19 saw the development of industry with the clay pit and clay works, foundry and the growing agricultural production of sheep, dairy, cereal and maltings. This growth, which includes the construction of the former Chapel (Baptist Cottage) changed the character of the village which has remained relatively unaltered since.

The historic maps show that the site was open land with a large pond until the development of the Post Office in the early 1900s, No. 83 is a modern brick bungalow set on higher ground, with an extension and double garage being formed in c.1995. The non-native hedge has grown and provides screening from the street scene apart from at the drive and prevents views out into the countryside. No.85, the subject of this application, is more prominent in the street scene as it sits closer to the road though again the hedge provides some screening. The once pedestrian steps have been lost which has created a small gap in the hedge. A new vehicle access (formed c.2020) provides access to the parking area to the side of the bungalow. This property appears to be early 20th century, retaining its Crittall windows and central arched

porch. Its modest scale and appearance mean that within the street scene creates limited impact but does offer some glimpsed views out to the countryside.

The conservation area appraisal (October 2003), recognises the topology of the area, with the raised buildings on one side (southern) in contrast to the site, and the changes between Lower High Street (where the application site is) and as the road bends and heads up the hill the street is recognised as Upper High Street with a different character area.

The appraisal states:

The lower High Street

Opposite the long hedge to Highfield House [No.79] a closely built-up row of cottages extend down one side of the High Street. All are set above the pavement behind small front gardens and stone retaining walls with steps up to front doors....

Summary

Great Cheverell is a picturesque estate village where preservation of the 'status quo' should be the preferred policy of conservation. Further blocks of development in meadows adjoining the village would not be appropriate.

Trees, verges and other landscape features are important to preserve but are most vulnerable to change through neglect.

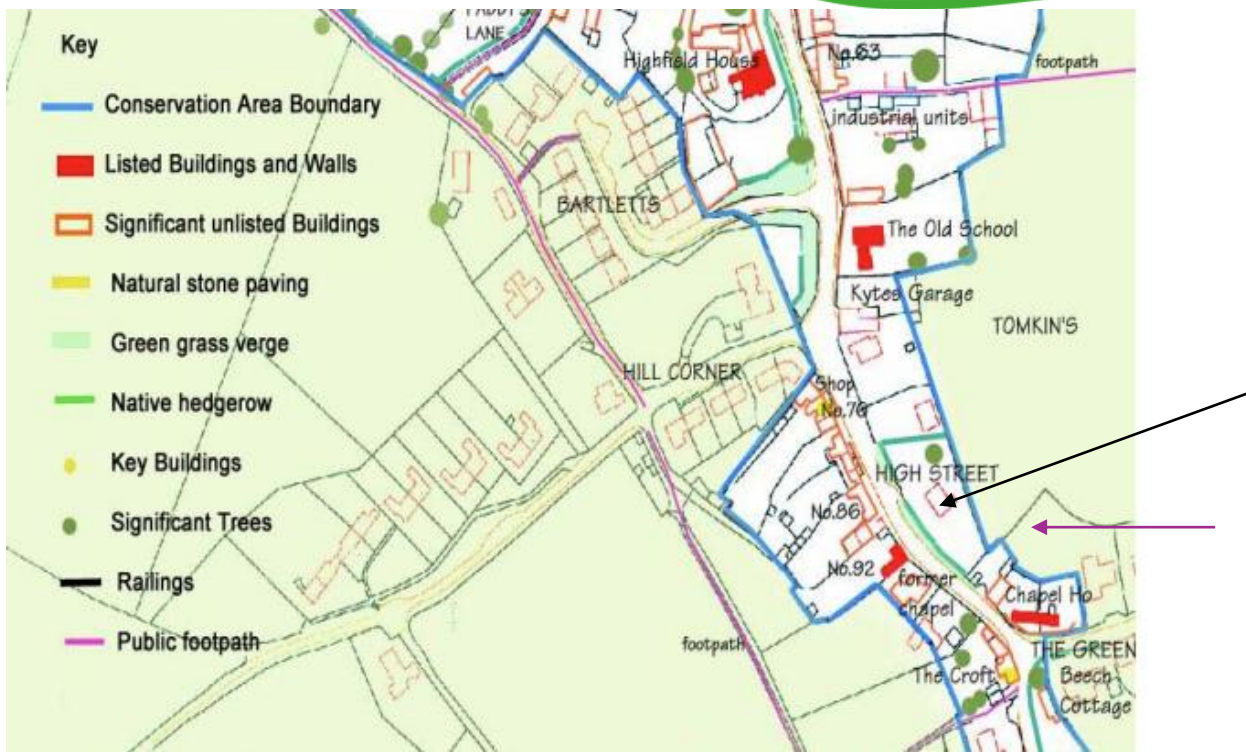
CONCLUSIONS

The potential for development within the Conservation Area is very limited. It is important to recognize the shape and layout of the village taking into account its historic boundaries and the low density of buildings.

The character of the village would be adversely affected by changes to the buildings. Erosion of character would occur through the application of standard solutions. The historic interest of buildings might be diminished through inattention to the preservation of external architectural detail and traditional materials.

Changes to the natural environment both private and public may occur through lack of expertise or attention to traditional rural practices. Change to the 'status quo' may emanate from neglect of the public domain

The appraisal provides a map that highlights aspects that contribute to the character of the area, including native hedges. The centre of the village is noted as being the junction of the High Street (on the bend) and Church Road, but the whole of the built environment within the historic core and the surrounding landscape contributes to the character of the conservation area. It recognises that the buildings opposite the site are 'significance unlisted buildings' and therefore these are now considered as non-designated heritage assets (NDHA). Within this group is the Grade II listed 92 High Street, dated to the C18, with colour washed brick with a thatched roof. Part of the interest in this group is the subtle variety of the designs, including vernacular design and development responding to the C19 phase of development related to the development of the industry and agriculture in the village. Small details such as the diaper work and brick work showing 'IM 1770' to No.78, or the uniformity of materials (with the exception of the painted frame to 86-88 High Street (Hillview).



Map from Conservation Appraisal

Baptist Cottage, No.87, adjacent to the site, is a brick building of modest scale and formed part of the curtilage to Chapel House (No.1 The Green) which is Grade II listed, therefore Baptist Cottage is considered to be curtilage listed and provides a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area.

On the junction of The Green is a pair of semi-detached two-storey brick houses (GII). 5 The Green increases the scale to a three-bay house, but dates from the mid-late C20. The modern development continues up to the railway bridge on the west side of the road. The architecture of these houses varies, but all single storey until Beech House which sits at the start of the slope up towards High Street. The east side of The Green was developed by the mid-1800s.

The conservation area boundary stops at the boundary with 1 The Green and runs along the rear boundary lines of the properties but excludes part of the garage and The Old Nursery School, along the High Street and continues into Church Road. Whilst the boundary stops, the views from the north towards the Conservation Area are important as they retain the rural appearance of the village. This means that any development along the boundary needs careful consideration.

An Appeal (2003 – APP/E3905/A/02/1106465) was dismissed which was for the 'sloping pasture behind the back garden at 1 The Green' (purple arrow on map above) which retained its 'agricultural appearance.' The main issue was the 'impact of the proposed change of use upon the quality of the landscape and the setting of the village', which is a planning consideration. The Inspector noted 'as the site adjoins a Conservation Area', they had a legal duty to consider whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character of the area as a whole' (para.4). The common factor with this site and the application site is the view from the Vale of Pewsey towards the conservation area.

Assessment:

The submitted scheme offers the same design for both plots, with development set towards the front of the plot from the existing dwelling, with a central drive, with a rear area for parking. To allow for the level parking and to create a large flat area for the proposed two bungalows, then a large area of the ground will

need to be removed to create a level access from the road. This has been suggested to reduce the visual impact of the new dwellings but will result in the requirement of some substantial retaining structures (gabion baskets) to be formed. Additional boundary treatments, including a boundary wall between the two plots will be formed within the centre of the proposed new access.

Following the previous conservation comments, a revised scheme has been submitted which retains the same Mock Tudor bungalows but reduces the width of the central drive and retains the tall brick boundary wall which separate the two new plots. This amendment does not address the several concerns previously raised.

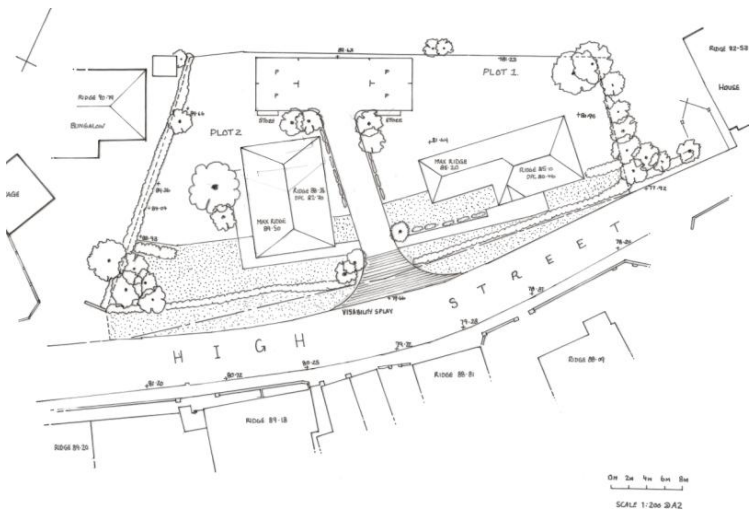
Loss of Marshfield

Marshfield is a simple, brick-built bungalow, typical of an early C20 design, with square bays and associated Crittall windows and a hipped roof. It sits within the centre of the plot, with access to the side that was formed c.2020. The access is minimal, allows for the retention of the long hedge boundary, with a former pedestrian access (now lost) to Marshfield, up to the small entrance for No.83, where the hedge (though a change of plant) continues until the change of character to the rural, open nature with the small garage that was built in the mid C20, the former school and the complex that is now the Greta Bank group of small industrial buildings.

The small nature of the existing building, the limited hard landscaping and access contribute to the open nature of the site as previously raised in the previous comments. As previously noted, the loss of the building itself is considered to cause no harm to the character of the conservation area, the setting of the listed buildings (including the curtilage listed Baptist Chapel) and the NDHAs.

Proposed replacement

The 2022 scheme looked to create two new dwellings which had smaller footprints than the proposed footprints, retaining more open space around the dwellings with limited hard standing and built form. This scheme was refused as it did not respect the existing character and form of the settlement, and 'the siting, design and layout would not respect the existing pattern of development within the immediate context of the site and would have a harmful impact on the locally distinctive character and appearance of the site which contributes towards the character and appearance of the Great Cheverell Conservation Area.' It is unclear how the larger scale buildings, with a more formal entrance, boundary walls and design is considered to respond to these concerns.



Previous Proposed Site Plan – PL/2022/09110

Whilst the width of the central access has been reduced in the revised drawings, the dominating feature is the large dividing boundary wall, the retaining wall (gabion baskets) and the brick piers to the entrance. These features are at odds with the open nature of the site, and as previously advised, introducing urban elements to the rural site.

The proposed scale of the new dwellings almost fills the plots (the combination of hardstanding and dwelling forms a majority of the site), which loses the open nature and spacing of the dwellings to this part of the village. This is considered to cause harm to the setting of the designated heritage assets.

The proposed moving the building line towards the boundary line reduces the ability to create a softer space to the front and increases the risk of hedging or plants being removed or lowered to increase the natural light into the dwelling or being replaced with a fence to protect from the traffic or to 'create privacy'. More importantly, due to the proposed reduction in ground levels to create the large flat areas for the development and the parking, it is likely to result in a built-up section in front of the buildings, which could affect the living conditions of the residents, and but also impact on the retention of the hedge and therefore the appearance of the street scene. It is recommended that several cross sections are provided to ensure that the works protect both of these aspects. The creation of solid boundary treatments to the front elevation will not be supported as this would cause increased harm to the character of the conservation area.

The proposed reduction of the ground levels to the front needs to be considered from the wider setting, as the topology is an important aspect of the character of the conservation area.

The views towards the conservation area are as important to character of the conservation area, and its setting. It is difficult to ascertain from the submitted information how the post and wire boundary fence to the rear and the development will be seen when looking south from Vale of Pewsey.

As previously stated, the previous concerns over the urban appearance of the development have not been addressed in the revised scheme. The creation of the 5m wide tarmac entrance introduces a new formal opening, using an urban material to the rural setting, this is further enhanced by the brick piers which resemble gate piers. The wide parking area, bigger than the existing property contributes little to the rural setting, and the tall boundary wall between the two plots which will be clearly seen from the street scene adds to the built form on the site. The rear of the parking is screened with the retaining wall, and whilst it is formed of stone and will become a 'green wall', this will be topped by a picket fence which will be of a similar height to the eaves of the property, this enhances the urban appearance.

Proposed Design

The conservation area is formed of a mix of buildings, a majority of which are two storeys, with either brick or painted render/ brick finish. The roof materials are generally tile, with some slate on the Victorian buildings, such as the village hall. Exposed timber frame (especially decorated in black and white) is not common along the High Street, with 86-88 High Street being the exception. Hillcrest (No.79) overlooks the site, offering a brick side elevation to the street scene. This is a two-storey, brick-built dwelling with a pair of bay windows, with timbered gables above. The entrance door set within the recessed arched opening is similar to the that of Marshfield, and likely to be of a similar date. The character of the building is typically of the age of construction, and is well proportioned as a large, detached house.

It understood that Hillcrest was the inspiration for the proposed new bungalows. However, the proposed design offers a vertical emphasis, with mirrored dwellings, formed of a pair of unsymmetrical gables, one with a projecting bay, the other with a flush window finish, highlighted with a coloured render detail. Whilst this takes some design ethos from Hillcrest, the proportions are at odds. Hillcrest offers a narrow side elevation to the street scene, resembling the width of the older properties within its close proximity. The copying of the design for the two dwellings appears to contrast with the older built form, which is more of a group of design (as in terrace), or individual design. The asymmetry is not a common feature within the conservation area, or the combination of materials. Gables are limited, with Hillcrest being the exception with two gables which are symmetrical. Therefore the repetition and mirroring of the proposed bungalows

respond to an urban setting, rather than offering an individuality of the street scene in a rural area that has organically developed. The urban planning is enhanced by the careful placement within each plot.

The proposed design, with the mix of materials (brick and render), conflicts single material choice within the properties. Again, Hillcrest is predominantly brick construction, with render applied only to the gable detail, adding a simple architectural detail. The material choice is questioned with the use of aluminium windows, which whilst the current building has Crittall, these respond to the simple design and are honest to the time of construction.

This application is considered to be more harmful to the character of the conservation area than the previously refused application (2022) due to the increased footprint, the creation of the large and dominating retaining walls and the brick boundary wall. The proposed design, though loosely based on a neighbouring building, is not a common design within the conservation area. A more sensitive approach to the design, scale and form, and their relationship to the plots, is recommended if the applicant considers that they can clearly justified the increase of development in this sensitive location.

Summary & conclusion: The NPPF confirms that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). It makes clear that any harm to a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification.

The proposed scheme substantially increases the built form on the site, and together with the proposed reduction in ground levels (and the associated engineering works) is considered to cause harm to the setting of the listed buildings, including the Baptist Chapel, and to the character of the conservation area. The proposals are considered as causing 'less than substantial harm' for the purposes of interpreting the NPPF. Indeed, the wording of the NPPF and the 'special regard' by Section 71 of the Act requires that any level harm caused should be taken seriously.

Whilst paragraph 215 allows that a level of harm may be offset by public benefits, which could include conservation benefits, in this case no objective justification has been provided for the works and it has not been demonstrated that the works will result in any public benefit. As a result, the proposals fail to meet with the requirements of current conservation legislation, policy or guidance and I therefore recommend refusal.