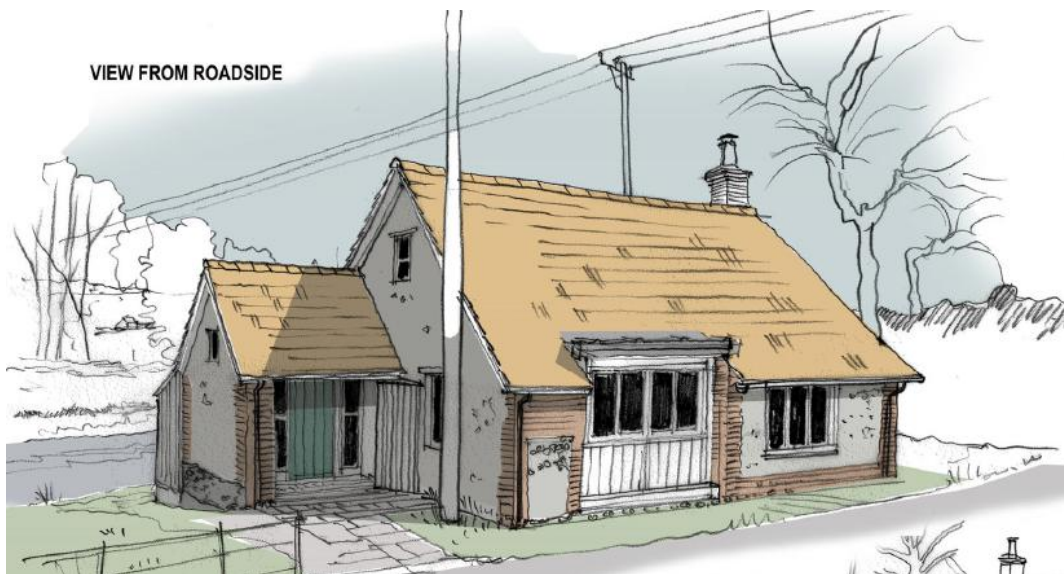


PLANNING STATEMENT

CONVERSION OF FORMER SMITHY TO A SINGLE RESIDENTIAL DWELLING AND ASSOCIATED WORKS AT THE OLD FORGE, UPPERWOODFORD, SP4 6NU

ON BEHALF OF MR GEORGE CHITTY



AUGUST 2026

**TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by RAW Planning Ltd in support of a full planning application for the conversion of an existing former smithy building (known as The Old Forge) to a residential dwelling, including associated parking and landscaping. The application is submitted on behalf of Mr Chitty (the “Applicant”) and relates to land at The Old Forge, Upper Woodford, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP4 6NU (the “Application Site”).
- 1.2 The proposal seeks to secure a viable and sensitive reuse of a non-designated heritage asset. The building is of historic and architectural interest, formerly a blacksmith’s forge and later a workshop, currently vacant but structurally sound. The scheme aims to preserve and enhance the character of the building while respecting the surrounding Special Landscape Area and the setting of nearby Grade II Listed Buildings. The design carefully considers its sensitive landscape and ecological context, ensuring appropriate integration with the local environment.
- 1.3 This application follows positive pre-application advice received from Wiltshire Council in October 2024 (ref: ENQ/2024/00988) where the principle of converting the building to residential use was supported. The advice also covered key issues including heritage conservation, landscape impact, biodiversity, flood risk, highways, drainage, and nutrient neutrality, all of which have been addressed within this submission.
- 1.4 This Planning Statement is intended to assist the Local Planning Authority (LPA) in their assessment of the application. It provides a comprehensive overview of the site and its context (Section 2), details of the proposed development (Section 3), the relevant planning policy framework (Section 4), a thorough planning assessment addressing key matters (Section 5), and the overall planning balance and conclusion (Section 6).

2. THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site is located within Upper Woodford, which is to the north of a collection of villages known as The Woodfords. Upper Woodford lies approximately 8 km north of Salisbury city centre and 8 km south of Amesbury. The village is bound to the east by the winding course of the River Avon, which forms an important landscape and ecological feature of the area.

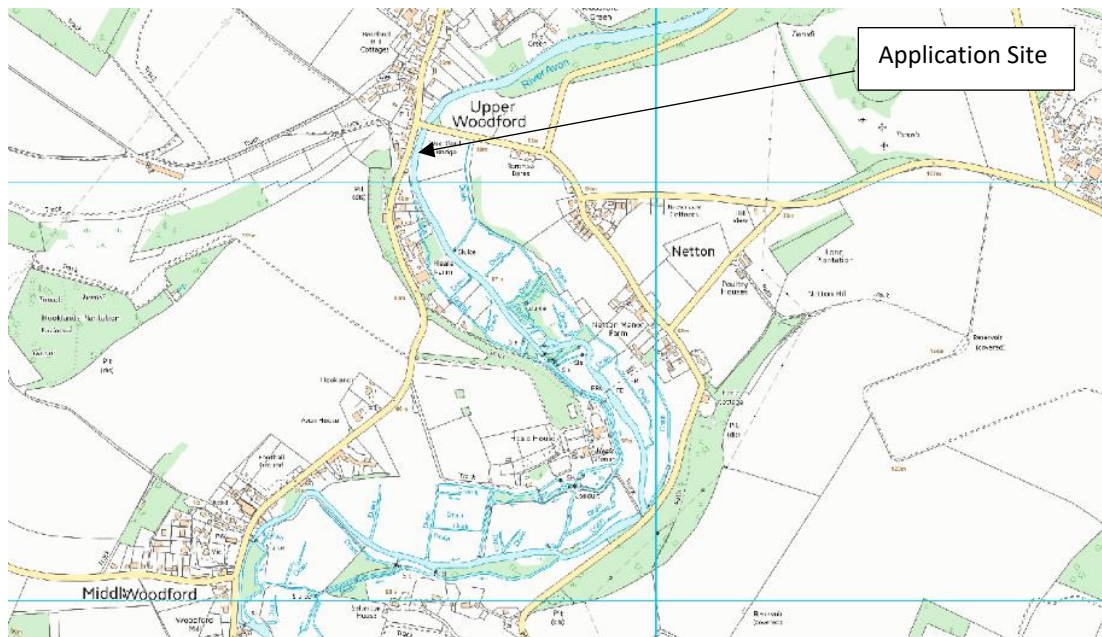


Figure 1 – mapping of the site

- 2.1 The Woodfords collectively benefit from a range of local amenities including two public houses, a church, a village hall, a primary school, and a garden centre. Upper Woodford is served by regular bus routes providing connections to Salisbury, Amesbury, and other rural settlements.
- 2.2 The application site itself extends to approximately 970 sqm and is located on the west side of the River Avon. It comprises a modest, single-storey former smithy building alongside associated grassland. The site occupies a roadside position adjacent to a classified highway, with residential properties bounding it to the north and south. The eastern boundary of the site follows the River Avon, beyond which lies open pastureland. To the north of the building, there is a strip of open riverside land that has historically remained open and publicly accessible.
- 2.3 The Old Forge is a building of considerable historic interest and architectural character, classed as a non-designated heritage asset. It features on historic maps dating from the Tithe map of 1839 through to the Ordnance Survey map of 1879. Cartographic evidence indicates that the building's footprint expanded between the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

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- 2.4 Originally constructed as a blacksmith's forge, the building was later adapted for use as a carpentry workshop and subsequently as a garage/workshop. In recent years, it has become vacant but remains in good structural condition. Many of the windows are boarded up, and overgrown vegetation obscures parts of the structure.
- 2.5 Architecturally, the building is constructed of cob with rendering over a flint base. Brickwork is present around door and window openings, as well as on the southern chimney stack. The building has a gabled roof with the ridge running parallel to the adjacent road, covered with double Roman clay tiles and featuring low eaves. The principal elevation facing the road includes timber doors and a window, with additional fenestration to the sides and rear. Attached to the northern end are a small gabled shed and a corrugated roof lean-to. Internally, the building comprises a single open space extending to the underside of the roof.
- 2.6 In relation to national and local land designations for the purpose of planning policy, the site is situated in the Amesbury Community Area and within the small village designation of Middle Woodford. The site and surrounding landscape lie within a Special Landscape Area and within the setting of two Grade II Listed buildings (No.48 Upper Woodford & Woodford Bridge).
- 2.7 While parts of the site fall within Flood Zones 2, indicating moderate fluvial flood risk, the building itself is situated entirely within Flood Zone 1, which is classified as the lowest flood risk for planning purposes. The site is also identified as having some surface water flood risk and areas affected by groundwater emergence.
- 2.8 The site lies within the Hampshire River Avon Catchment, where new residential development is required to achieve nutrient neutrality.

3. THE APPLICATION PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The proposed development seeks full planning permission for the sensitive conversion of the former smithy known as The Old Forge into a single residential dwelling. The scheme includes associated parking, landscaping, and minor external works, all carefully developed following positive pre-application advice to secure the viable reuse of this non-designated heritage asset while preserving its historic character and setting.
- 3.2 The existing building will be retained in its entirety with minimal alterations to its external form and appearance. The design includes the removal of the existing lean-to on the east (rear) elevation, replaced by a newly constructed timber-clad lean-to that replicates the original timber shed appearance. This lean-to will be set down three steps from the main floor level to avoid raising the roof height and will incorporate a single rooflight within its corrugated metal roof. The north-side pitched roof storage extension will be retained and enhanced, with the existing external double doors converted to secure bi-fold shutters, and a new timber-framed doorset will provide a covered lobby entry beneath the existing roof.



Figure 2 – proposed visual

- 3.3 Internally, the open-plan nature of the forge space will be preserved and sensitively adapted to maintain the large single volume with a high, steeply pitched roof. A new independently framed timber gallery sleeping area will be introduced, allowing the ceiling to remain double height over the southern sitting area, which will include a woodburning stove set within the existing chimney stack. Floors will be lowered to accommodate a limecrete slab with a Glapor sub-base for moisture control. Wherever

possible, original cob walls will be preserved and repaired, with lime plaster finishes applied throughout and some exposed cob left visible in suitable locations to retain character.

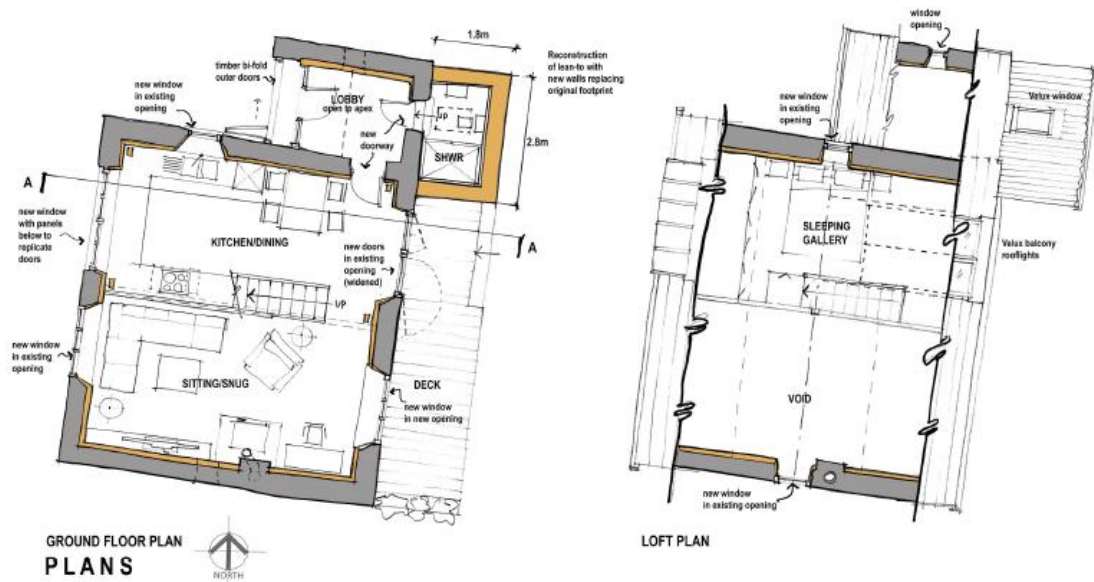


Figure 3 – proposed floorplans

- 3.4 Windows and doors will be reinstated or sensitively introduced to improve natural light while respecting the building's historic appearance. These include high-level glazing within the front doors and a new set of French doors to the rear. Glazing details will replicate original features, such as timber panel infills below window cills to resemble former doors. The rebuilt section of the east elevation will feature horizontal timber boarding above the plinth, contrasting with the vertical boarding of the lean-to, both finished in larch or spruce timber left to weather naturally.
- 3.5 The proposals include the provision of two parking spaces adjacent to the highway on a strip of land at the front of the building. These parking areas are designed to meet visibility and highway safety standards, ensuring convenient vehicle access while maintaining the character of the roadside frontage and riverside setting. The historically open riverside strip to the north of the building will remain open and unenclosed, preserving its important role in the historic character and setting of the village and nearby listed buildings.
- 3.6 Landscaping proposals focus on minimal intervention, aiming to retain existing mature vegetation where possible and to enhance the site with native planting that supports local biodiversity and complements the surrounding Special Landscape Area. Boundary treatments will be kept low and sympathetic, using features such as native hedgerows or post-and-rail fencing sparingly, to avoid enclosing the open riverside land and respect the village's historic layout.

- 3.7 The scheme has been designed with full regard to the ecological and environmental sensitivities of the site, which lies within the catchment of the River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Ecological mitigation and enhancement measures form a key part of the proposals, supported by detailed surveys and assessments submitted with the application. These include habitat retention, native planting, and the installation of bat boxes and bird nesting features.



Figure 4 – proposed site layout plan

- 3.8 Further detail on the design approach, heritage considerations, and environmental aspects of the scheme are set out in the accompanying Design and Access Statement and supporting technical reports.
- 3.9 In summary, the proposals represent a well-considered and sensitive conversion that secures the long-term safeguarding of a heritage asset, delivering a high-quality residential use which respects and enhances the character, ecology, and sense of place of this unique site.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that all planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is considered to be a material consideration which attracts significant weight.

4.2 This section refers to relevant national planning policy and guidance as well as Development Plan policies that provide the planning policy framework for this application that should be considered. It deals with the following layers of policy and guidance:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); and
- The Development Plan (including Neighbourhood Plans).

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

4.3 The NPPF outlines national guidance and the Government's policies on the many different aspects of planning. The latest version of the NPPF was published in December 2024.

4.4 Paragraph 2 explains that planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.5 Paragraph 10 confirms that at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

4.6 Paragraph 11 states that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 11 goes on to state that for decision-taking this means:

“c) Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole”.

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- 4.7 Paragraph 61 sets out Central Government's objective to significantly boost the supply of homes, identifying that to support this objective it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed.
- 4.8 Paragraph 73 recognises that small sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built-out relatively quickly.
- 4.9 Paragraph 83 states that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services.
- 4.10 Paragraph 84 supports the development of isolated homes in the countryside where it represents the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or constitutes appropriate enabling development to secure the future of such assets. Additionally, it encourages the re-use of redundant or disused buildings that enhance their immediate setting.
- 4.11 Paragraph 124 states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.
- 4.12 Section 12 is entitled "Achieving well-designed places". Paragraph 131 explains that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Paragraph 135 sets out that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments would add to the overall quality of their area; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.
- 4.13 Section 16 is entitled "Conserving and enhancing the historic environment". Paragraph 205 states 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).
- 4.14 Paragraph 216 states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

The Development Plan

- 4.15 The Statutory Development Plan covering the application site comprises the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) (2015), the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan and saved Policies of the Salisbury Local Plan (of which there are no relevant policies).

Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015)

- 4.16 The most relevant policies in the consideration of this application are as follows:
- 4.17 **Core Policy 48 (Conversion and re-use of rural buildings)** supports proposals to convert and re-use rural buildings for tourism (amongst other) uses where they satisfy five criteria as follows:
- I. The building(s) is/are structurally sound and capable of conversion without major rebuilding, and with only necessary extension or modification which preserves the character of the existing building.
 - II. The use would not detract from the character or appearance of the landscape or settlement and would not be detrimental to the amenities of residential streets.
 - III. The building can be served by adequate access and infrastructure.
 - IV. The site has reasonable access to local services.
 - V. The conversion or re-use of a heritage asset would lead to its long term safeguarding.
- 4.18 It then goes on to say that where there is clear evidence that the above uses are not practical propositions, residential development may be appropriate where it meets the above criteria. In isolated locations, the re-use of redundant or disused buildings for residential purposes may be permitted where justified by special circumstances, in line with national policy.
- 4.19 **Core Policy 50 (Biodiversity and geodiversity)** states that developments should attempt to conserve and preserve sites for their ecological value, as part of this the policy expects there should be no net loss of biodiversity value.
- 4.20 **Core Policy 51 (Landscape)** focuses on protecting, conserving, and enhancing landscape character, with particular attention to National Landscapes (formerly AONBs). Development must avoid harmful impacts on landscape character, and any negative effects should be mitigated through sensitive design and landscape measures. Proposals must respect the distinctive features of the landscape, such as natural elements, settlement character, views, and tranquillity.
- 4.21 **Core Policy 57 (Ensuring high quality design and place shaping)** sets out 14 criteria which all new developments must meet, including alterations to existing buildings. Specifically, criterion (iv) requires

development to be sympathetic to, and conserve historic buildings, and criterion (xii) requires the use of high standards of building materials and finishes.

- 4.22 **Core Policy 58 (Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment)** states that development should protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment. Designated heritage assets should be appropriately enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance.

5. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 5.1 The development proposed involves the sensitive conversion of a former smithy building known as The Old Forge into a single residential dwelling. Accordingly, Wiltshire Core Policy 48 is applicable, which states:

‘Proposals to convert and re-use rural buildings for employment, tourism, cultural and community uses will be supported where they satisfy the following criteria:

- I. The building(s) is/are structurally sound and capable of conversion without major rebuilding, and with only necessary extension or modification which preserves the character of the original building.*
- II. The use would not detract from the character or appearance of the landscape or settlement and would not be detrimental to the amenities of residential areas.*
- III. The building can be served by adequate access and infrastructure.*
- IV. The site has reasonable access to local services.*
- V. The conversion or re-use of a heritage asset would lead to its viable long term safeguarding.*

- 5.2 The policy also permits residential development where there is clear evidence that alternative uses are not practical. Accordingly, a detailed Viability Appraisal prepared by Woolley & Wallis Chartered Surveyors has been submitted, demonstrating that employment, tourism (holiday accommodation), and cultural/community uses for The Old Forge are unviable. Due to the building’s small scale, historic nature, modest footprint, constrained access, and limited demand in this rural context, these alternative uses would not generate sufficient returns to support refurbishment and long-term maintenance.

- 5.3 Specifically, the site’s access via a narrow village lane limits suitability for B2/B8 commercial uses, while office use is constrained by inadequate parking and low rural demand. Holiday lets are also considered financially unviable due to saturation in the local market and insufficient revenue potential. Community or cultural uses, though theoretically possible, are financially unsustainable and already well provided for in the wider area. The appraisal factors in realistic development costs—including BCIS-standard conversion costs, professional fees, financing charges, and developer profit—and concludes that none of the alternative uses would result in a positive residual land value or deliver an adequate return.

These conclusions were acknowledged in the pre-application advice received from Wiltshire Council, which recognised residential conversion as the most practical and suitable option.

- 5.4 In relation to criterion (i), the building is evidently structurally sound and capable of conversion without major rebuilding. The proposals retain existing materials and fabric, incorporating only minimal and sensitive alterations that preserve the building's historic character.
- 5.5 In accordance with criterion (ii), the proposed residential use would not detract from the character or appearance of the landscape or settlement. The building's external appearance remains largely unchanged, and the modest parking and garden areas are sensitively designed to blend with the village context. The site is well integrated within the existing built form of Upper Woodford, and adequate separation distances and boundary treatments ensure no adverse impacts on neighbouring amenity.
- 5.6 Criterion (iii) and (iv) are also met, as the building benefits from existing vehicular access with good visibility onto the adjacent classified highway. The site enjoys reasonable access to local services, located approximately equidistant between Salisbury and Amesbury with regular bus services connecting to both. Local amenities including public houses, a church, village hall, primary school, and garden centre are all within a short distance.
- 5.7 The Old Forge is identified as a non-designated heritage asset. Criterion (v) is satisfied as the conversion will secure the building's viable long-term safeguarding, preserving its heritage significance. This is supported by a heritage statement prepared by Elaine Milton Heritage and Planning, which confirms that residential reuse represents a sustainable future for the asset.
- 5.8 The pre-application response from Wiltshire Council also supports residential conversion as the most appropriate use, given the site's characteristics and viability considerations. Furthermore, as the site is not isolated but lies within the village fabric, the tests relating to isolated rural dwellings under national policy do not apply.
- 5.9 In summary, the principle of residential conversion is fully supported by Core Policy 48 and the NPPF, with all relevant criteria met. The accompanying viability statement demonstrates that alternative uses are not economically feasible, justifying the proposed residential use. The development will secure the sensitive re-use and long-term conservation of an important rural heritage asset within a sustainable location.

Heritage Impact

- 5.10 The Old Forge is a mid-19th century building of historic and architectural interest, identified as a non-designated heritage asset. The NPPF requires that development proposals conserve heritage assets

proportionate to their significance. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special regard to the preservation of listed buildings and their settings. Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policy 58 similarly seeks to protect and enhance the historic environment.

- 5.11 Pre-application advice from Wiltshire Council's conservation officer welcomed the principle of residential reuse to secure a viable future for The Old Forge. The advice highlighted the importance of preserving the building's fabric, avoiding enclosure of the open riverside land to the north, and carefully considering parking provision and boundary treatments to protect the setting of nearby Grade II listed buildings.
- 5.12 A detailed Heritage Statement accompanies this application and addresses these points. It confirms The Old Forge's local historic and architectural significance and its contribution to the village character and listed building settings. The proposals retain and repair original cob walls where possible, with only minor rebuilding using traditional materials. Existing openings are reused and new fenestration is sensitively designed to maintain the building's character.
- 5.13 The scheme respects the open character of the riverside land, avoiding enclosure that would harm the setting of both The Old Forge and adjacent listed buildings. Parking is accommodated discreetly in a layby to the north, minimising impact on the heritage setting.
- 5.14 In conclusion, the submitted Heritage Statement finds that the proposed conversion of The Old Forge would secure its long-term preservation, resulting in an overall positive outcome for the heritage asset. The scheme carefully balances any minor harm or loss against the significance of the building and its setting, in line with paragraph 216 of the NPPF.

Highway Safety

- 5.15 The WCS sets out the framework for highway safety and parking standards in new developments. Core Policy 57 requires that all new development provide safe and convenient access, adequate parking, and minimise traffic impact on the local highway network. The Wiltshire Parking Strategy provides further detailed guidance, setting parking standards appropriate to the scale and location of development.
- 5.16 Currently, the building has no allocated parking provision. The application includes the provision of two new parking spaces on a strip of land between the classified highway and the River Avon to the north of the building.
- 5.17 In line with the pre-application advice from Wiltshire Council, the parking spaces have been designed to provide satisfactory visibility splays of 2.4 metres by 43 metres in both directions at and above a height of 900mm, consistent with the 30mph speed limit on the adjacent highway.

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- 5.18 Although the pre-application response suggested that a turning area would ideally be included to allow vehicles to enter and exit the highway in a forward gear, the physical constraints of the site restrict the feasibility of such a provision. Instead, the parking is arranged in a layby-style format, ensuring vehicles can safely pull off the highway without impeding traffic flow.
- 5.19 The proposed provision of two parking spaces exceeds the Wiltshire Parking Strategy's minimum requirement of one space for a one-bedroom dwelling, providing adequate parking capacity to meet the needs of future occupants and visitors.
- 5.20 Overall, the proposals demonstrate compliance with relevant highway policy, address the pre-application recommendations, and balance the need for safe vehicular access with sensitivity to the site's heritage and landscape context.

Neighbouring Amenity

- 5.21 The proposal has been designed in accordance with WCS Policy CP57 (Ensuring High Quality Design and Space Shaping), which requires new development to ensure that impacts on the amenities of existing occupants and neighbours are acceptable. The NPPF also stresses the importance of securing high quality design and a good standard of amenity for both existing and future occupants.
- 5.22 The pre-application advice for this site confirmed that the initial proposals raised no significant concerns with regard to neighbouring amenity. Since that time, the design has been further refined as part of a comprehensive scheme to sensitively convert the derelict Old Forge building for residential use, as detailed in the accompanying Design Statement.
- 5.23 The design retains the building's character and footprint, with careful consideration given to fenestration, massing, and external works to minimise any impact on neighbouring properties. Existing window openings will be reinstated, many of which are currently boarded up or obscured by vegetation, and only a small number of new, modest openings are proposed, including high-level glazing within the front doors and a set of French doors to the rear.
- 5.24 The rear elevation faces the River Avon and adjacent pastureland, with no immediate neighbours in close proximity. The nearest residential property, Renshaw Barns, lies approximately 250 metres to the east, which is sufficiently distant to prevent any meaningful overlooking or loss of privacy.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 5.25 The site falls within Flood Zone 1 but abuts Flood Zone 2 and lies within an area of mapped groundwater flood risk as identified by the Wiltshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). As such, a proportionate Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been undertaken.

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- 5.26 The FRA confirms the site is at low risk of fluvial flooding and very low risk of surface water flooding. Groundwater flooding risk is low with no expected surface manifestations. Risks from sewer and artificial sources are negligible.
- 5.27 Surface water drainage follows the required hierarchy, prioritising collection and reuse of runoff, infiltration, discharge to watercourses, and, lastly, combined sewers. The existing drainage arrangements will be retained but improved by the installation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) planters. These planters will attenuate runoff, slow water discharge, enhance water quality, and provide biodiversity and amenity benefits in line with the Non-statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems and the CIRIA SuDS Manual (C753).
- 5.28 The FRA also ensures design provisions for exceedance flows, directing excess water safely to landscaped areas to avoid flooding.
- 5.29 Overall, the development meets the pre-application expectations for flood risk and drainage management, demonstrating a safe development over its lifetime and providing minor betterment in surface water runoff management in accordance with the NPPF and local policy.

Nutrient Neutrality

- 5.30 The site falls within the catchment of the River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which is currently in an unfavourable condition due to phosphorous pollution. In accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and current Natural England guidance, a nutrient budget has been calculated using the latest Defra and Wiltshire Council tools. This is set out in a Technical Note prepared by Nicola French (dated 24 March 2025), which supports this application.
- 5.31 Based on an assumed occupancy of 2.4 people and wastewater being treated at Amesbury Sewage Treatment Works, the nutrient budget calculates that the development will generate an additional 0.19 kg of Total Phosphorous (TP) per year prior to 2030, reducing to 0.11 kg TP per year following planned upgrades to the treatment works.
- 5.32 While the site falls outside defined settlement boundaries and is therefore not classified as planned development under Core Policy 2, it complies with Core Policy 48, which supports the sensitive reuse of rural built assets. Wiltshire Council's pre-application advice confirms that the proposal is consistent with this policy and may access the Council-led nutrient mitigation scheme.
- 5.33 To mitigate the additional nutrient load, it is proposed that a Grampian condition be applied to any permission, preventing commencement until phosphate mitigation credits have been secured through Wiltshire Council's nutrient mitigation scheme. With this in place, Wiltshire Council, as the competent

authority, can conclude that the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the River Avon SAC, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

Ecology

- 5.34 An Ecological Assessment was undertaken by Pro Vision Ecology in September 2025 to assess the ecological value of the site and the potential effects of the proposed conversion. The site comprises the existing disused forge, driveway, modified grassland, scrub, tall ruderal vegetation, reeds and trees, with the River Avon adjoining the eastern boundary. The assessment identified the River Avon as an important ecological corridor and confirmed that the site is adjacent to the River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The proposed development is small in scale and involves the conversion of the existing building without extending its footprint, and therefore would not result in direct impacts to the river channel or its designated features. Potential indirect effects during construction, including pollution, dust and disturbance, would be controlled through appropriate mitigation measures, including a Construction Environmental Management Plan.
- 5.35 The ecological surveys found no evidence of a bat roost within the existing building, and no reptiles, otters or water voles were recorded during the relevant surveys. Nevertheless, the River Avon and its associated riparian habitat provide suitable habitat for local wildlife, while the site also provides opportunities for foraging and nesting birds and foraging and commuting bats. Accordingly, appropriate measures are proposed in relation to lighting and vegetation clearance to minimise disturbance, including avoiding vegetation clearance during the main bird nesting season unless an ecological check confirms that no nesting birds are present.
- 5.36 The development will also incorporate ecological enhancements, including additional planting of reeds and marginal vegetation along the retained riverbank, together with the provision of bat and bird boxes. These measures will enhance the ecological value of the site and provide additional habitat for river birds and water voles.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 5.37 The proposed development is exempt from the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements. The application site extends to approximately 0.097 hectares within the red line boundary and therefore falls below the 0.2 hectare threshold for the new exemption applicable to planning applications submitted from 6th August 2026. The ecologist has also confirmed that the proposal will not impact any onsite priority habitat and therefore the development meets the relevant criteria for the exemption.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Full planning permission is sought for the sensitive conversion of the former smithy building known as The Old Forge into a single residential dwelling, including associated parking, landscaping, and minor external works, at Upper Woodford, Salisbury.
- 6.2 The proposal represents an appropriate and sustainable reuse of an existing rural building which would secure the long-term safeguarding of a non-designated heritage asset. The proposal has also been informed by positive pre-application advice from Wiltshire Council. The submitted Viability Report demonstrates that alternative employment, tourism, cultural and community uses are not viable or practical, and the proposal therefore accords with the requirements of Core Policy 48. The conversion can also be achieved without major rebuilding and would retain the character and appearance of the existing building.
- 6.3 The proposal would not result in unacceptable impacts in respect of heritage, landscape, residential amenity, highways, flood risk, drainage, nutrient neutrality or ecology. The scheme also incorporates appropriate ecological enhancements and is exempt from mandatory BNG requirements.
- 6.4 Overall, the proposal accords with the relevant policies of the Development Plan and the NPPF and would deliver a beneficial long-term use for the existing building. Planning permission is therefore respectfully requested.

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