



PLANNING STATEMENT

Project Number:

2026-2608

Project:

Meadow Cottage, Ogbourne St George, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 1SU

Proposal:

Retrospective Change of Use and Proposed Garden Store

Date:

August 2026

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicant, Mr Alistair Mitchell, in support of a full planning application at Meadow Cottage, Ogbourne St George, Marlborough, Wiltshire.
- 1.2. The application seeks planning permission for the retrospective change of use of a small parcel of former agricultural land to residential garden land associated with Meadow Cottage, together with the erection of a garden store on the existing hardstanding within that parcel.
- 1.3. The application has been submitted following the withdrawal of householder application PL/2026/02802. During the determination of that application, the Council advised that the planning status of the southern parcel should be addressed alongside the proposed garden store through a full planning application.
- 1.4. This Statement explains the history and present character of the land, assesses both elements of the proposal against the Development Plan and national policy, and demonstrates that planning permission should be granted.

2. Site Description

- 2.1. Meadow Cottage is a detached dwelling in a rural position on the edge of Ogbourne St George. The surrounding area comprises a mixture of dwellings, agricultural land, established vegetation and open countryside.
- 2.2. The property is reached by an existing private access track from the north. The northern end of the access lies within the Ogbourne St George Conservation Area and is included within the application red line solely because it forms the established access to the property.
- 2.3. The dwelling and the southern parcel to which the retrospective change of use relates lie outside the Conservation Area. The whole site lies within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.
- 2.4. The southern parcel is a small, broadly rectangular area immediately adjoining the established domestic land at Meadow Cottage. It is registered separately under title WT316149 and was transferred to the then owners of Meadow Cottage on 18 March 2014.
- 2.5. The parcel is now physically and visually integrated with the property. It forms part of the gravelled domestic forecourt and turning area, is retained by a low stone wall where levels change and is separated from the adjoining agricultural field by fencing, hedging and mature vegetation.
- 2.6. The proposed garden store would occupy the existing hardstanding to the south of the dwelling in the position shown on the submitted block plan. The site is contained by the dwelling, established boundaries and planting and is read as part of the domestic setting of Meadow Cottage.

3. Planning History, Background and Proposal

Planning History

- 3.1. The planning history includes permissions for domestic alterations and ancillary structures. Of particular relevance is permission 14/03722/FUL for a single-storey car port and conservatory. The officer assessment found the domestic structures acceptable in scale, design, landscape, amenity and highway terms.
- 3.2. Householder application PL/2026/02802 sought permission for the same garden store in the same original position. The application was withdrawn after the Council advised that the residential planning status of the southern parcel should first be addressed.
- 3.3. In the correspondence preceding withdrawal, the case officer confirmed that the Council had reviewed the original siting of the garden store and did not have any significant concerns regarding that location. The present application therefore retains the original siting and addresses the land-use issue identified by the Council.

Historical Change of Use and Evidence

- 3.4. The submitted evidence establishes a clear sequence in the physical and functional incorporation of the southern parcel into Meadow Cottage.
- 3.5. The May 2012 aerial photograph shows the parcel before its incorporation into the domestic area. The title documents then record its transfer from the adjoining agricultural ownership to the owners of Meadow Cottage on 18 March 2014.
- 3.6. The applicant understands from the former owner that the parcel was acquired to enlarge and square off the domestic forecourt. The applicant has explained that, during 2014 the land was levelled, a retaining wall was constructed, the surface was gravelled to match the existing driveway and fencing and a hedge were introduced to separate it from the agricultural field.
- 3.7. The May 2015 aerial photograph records the resulting arrangement. By that date, the former agricultural parcel had been physically separated from the field and incorporated into the domestic hardstanding serving Meadow Cottage.
- 3.8. The subsequent aerial photographs from April 2017, July 2020 and May 2025 show the same domestic arrangement continuing. They also record the establishment and maturation of the boundary vegetation. Contemporary site photographs confirm that the parcel remains gravelled, enclosed and used in association with the dwelling.
- 3.9. Taken together, the title transfer, the account of the works and the dated aerial sequence demonstrate that the material change of use occurred during 2014 and, in any event, no later than May 2015. The residential garden use has therefore continued for more than ten years.

Proposed Development

- 3.10. The application has two related elements: the retrospective change of use of the southern parcel from agricultural land to residential garden land associated with Meadow Cottage; and the erection of a garden store on the existing hardstanding.
- 3.11. No further physical works are required to implement the change of use. The gravel surface, retaining wall, boundary fencing, hedge and associated planting are established features that have been present for over a decade.
- 3.12. The proposed garden store is a modest, freestanding, single-storey structure intended solely for domestic storage. It contains no habitable accommodation and would remain ancillary to Meadow Cottage.
- 3.13. The submitted Oakwrights drawings show an oak-framed building with timber cladding and doors, Sandtoft roof tiles and a shallow roof pitch of approximately 15 degrees. Its scale, form and materials are appropriate to a rural domestic outbuilding.

4. National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1. The National Planning Policy Framework, revised in December 2024 and amended in February 2025, sets out the Government's planning policies for England and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Decision-Making and Sustainable Development

- 4.2. Paragraph 2 confirms that planning law requires applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Paragraph 11 establishes the presumption in favour of sustainable development and confirms that proposals which accord with an up-to-date Development Plan should be approved without delay.

Achieving Well-Designed Places

- 4.3. Chapter 12 gives significant weight to the creation of well-designed places. Paragraph 135 requires development to function well, add to the overall quality of an area, be visually attractive through good architecture and appropriate landscaping, and be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

- 4.4. Chapter 15 requires planning decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Paragraph 187 includes the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes, recognition of the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the wider benefits of agricultural land, trees and woodland, together with the minimisation of impacts on biodiversity.

Protected Landscapes

- 4.5. Paragraph 189 requires great weight to be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes. It also confirms that the scale and extent of development within designated landscapes should be limited and that proposals should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse effects.
- 4.6. Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, as amended, requires relevant authorities exercising functions which affect a National Landscape to seek to further the statutory purpose of conserving and enhancing its natural beauty.

Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

- 4.7. Chapter 16 requires applicants to describe the significance of heritage assets affected by development, including any contribution made by their setting, to a level proportionate to their importance. Great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets.

Flood Risk

- 4.8. Chapter 14 seeks to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and requires development to be safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Proportionate site-specific flood-risk information should be provided where relevant.

Planning Practice Guidance

Retrospective Applications and Lawful Development

- 4.9. National Planning Practice Guidance confirms that planning permission may be sought retrospectively under section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and that such applications are determined on their planning merits in the same way as applications made before development takes place.

- 4.10. The Guidance also explains that lawful development certificate applications under section 191 are determined as matters of fact and law rather than planning merit. A material change of use is generally immune from enforcement once the relevant statutory period has elapsed, subject to the applicable legal tests and exceptions.

5. Local Planning Policy

The Development Plan

- 5.1. For the purposes of section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Development Plan is the starting point for decision-making. The principal adopted policy document relevant to this application is the Wiltshire Core Strategy, adopted in January 2015, together with any applicable saved policies and made neighbourhood planning policies.

Wiltshire Core Strategy

Core Policy 50 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 5.2. Core Policy 50 seeks to protect features of biodiversity and geodiversity value and requires development to avoid adverse effects on habitats and species, with mitigation provided where necessary.

Core Policy 51 – Landscape

- 5.3. Core Policy 51 seeks to protect, conserve and enhance Wiltshire's distinctive landscape character. Development should protect important landscape features and demonstrate that it has been informed by, and responds positively to, the character of the site and its surroundings.

Core Policy 57 – Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping

- 5.4. Core Policy 57 requires a high standard of design which responds positively to the existing townscape and landscape context. Relevant considerations include scale, height, massing, layout, materials, the retention of important landscape features and the protection of neighbouring amenity.

Core Policy 58 – Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment

- 5.5. Core Policy 58 requires development to protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance the historic environment. Proposals should conserve designated heritage assets and their settings and should be sensitive to their significance, character and historic context.

Core Policies 60 and 61 – Sustainable Transport and Transport and New Development

- 5.6. Core Policies 60 and 61 seek to ensure that development is served by safe and suitable access arrangements, appropriately accommodates parking and manoeuvring and does not have an unacceptable effect on highway safety.

Core Policy 67 – Flood Risk

- 5.7. Core Policy 67 seeks to direct development away from areas at risk of flooding and requires proposals to demonstrate that they are safe and do not increase flood risk elsewhere.

Other Material Considerations

- 5.8. Other material considerations include the North Wessex Downs National Landscape Management Plan 2025–2030 and Landscape Character Assessment, the Wiltshire Design Guide, the National Design Guide, relevant Planning Practice Guidance, the planning history of the site and the submitted site-specific evidence.

6. Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

- 6.1. The application should be assessed as a combined proposal that regularises a longstanding residential garden use and introduces a modest ancillary building within the established domestic setting of Meadow Cottage.
- 6.2. The parcel is small, directly adjoins the dwelling and has no independent access. It has not formed a coherent or functional part of the adjoining agricultural field for more than a decade. Its separation from the wider field, altered levels, gravel surface, retaining wall and mature boundaries mean that it no longer reads or functions as part of the wider agricultural land.
- 6.3. The proposal does not create a separate planning unit, a new dwelling or an independent use. The land would remain ancillary to Meadow Cottage and the garden store would be used only for domestic storage.
- 6.4. The retrospective change of use and the proposed garden store are therefore acceptable in principle, subject to the detailed considerations addressed below.

Established Use and Enforcement Position

- 6.5. Although this is a planning application to determine the proposal on its merits, the longstanding use and the Council's enforcement position are material to the realistic planning baseline and fallback position.
- 6.6. Section 171B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provides a ten-year period for enforcement action against a material change of use of this nature. For immunity purposes, the evidence must show when the use began and that it continued without significant interruption for the relevant period.
- 6.7. The evidence here is consistent and mutually reinforcing. The parcel was transferred to the owners of Meadow Cottage in March 2014; the physical works and domestic incorporation are reported to have taken place during 2014; the May 2015 aerial photograph records the completed domestic arrangement; and later aerial photographs and current site photographs show its continuation.
- 6.8. On the balance of the available evidence, the residential garden use began during 2014 and certainly existed by May 2015. It has therefore subsisted continuously for more than ten years and the applicant considers it immune from enforcement action.
- 6.9. A lawful development certificate could be sought under section 191 of the 1990 Act to confirm that position. That is a genuine and available fallback should planning permission not be granted. The applicant has instead followed the Council's suggested pragmatic route of seeking permission for the existing use and the proposed store together.
- 6.10. The fallback is important because refusal would not return the parcel to agricultural use. The established domestic use would continue, and the applicant would remain able to seek a lawful development certificate based on the same and any further supporting evidence. Granting planning permission would therefore provide a clear and proportionate resolution without causing any additional planning harm.

Landscape and Visual Effects of the Change of Use

- 6.11. The physical and visual effects associated with the change of use occurred between 2012 and 2015. The land was levelled, gravelled and enclosed, with a retaining wall and boundary planting introduced at that time. No further landscape-altering works are required as part of the retrospective element of this application.
- 6.12. Those features have now been present for more than a decade. The hedge and other planting have matured, the retaining wall has weathered, and the gravelled parcel has become an established part of the setting of Meadow Cottage.

- 6.13. The historical aerial sequence is particularly relevant because it demonstrates not only when the change occurred, but also how the parcel has assimilated into the landscape over time. It is no longer perceived as a fresh extension of domestic activity into an open field.
- 6.14. The parcel is closely contained around the dwelling and does not project independently into the surrounding countryside. The existing boundary follows a clear physical division between the domestic hardstanding and the adjoining field.
- 6.15. The small loss of agricultural land has no meaningful effect on the operation, openness or visual continuity of the wider field. Conversely, the mature planted boundary provides a defined and enduring edge to the domestic area.
- 6.16. The retrospective change of use therefore causes no present adverse effect on landscape character or scenic beauty. Any historic effect has long since occurred and has been successfully absorbed into the established landscape framework.

Design, Siting and Character of the Garden Store

- 6.17. The garden store is clearly subordinate to Meadow Cottage. Its single-storey form, modest footprint and shallow roof pitch keep its height and visual mass to a minimum.
- 6.18. The simple rectangular form appropriately reflects its storage function. The oak frame, timber cladding, timber doors and tiled roof are restrained materials commonly associated with ancillary buildings in rural domestic settings.
- 6.19. The store would stand on the existing hardstanding to the south of the dwelling. This avoids additional ground disturbance and places the building within the part of the site already characterised by domestic activity and built form.
- 6.20. The original position was considered during application PL/2026/02802 and the case officer confirmed that there were no significant concerns with that siting. It also preserves the established area used for access, parking and vehicle manoeuvring.
- 6.21. The building would be viewed against the domestic context of Meadow Cottage and the established boundary vegetation rather than as an isolated structure in the open countryside. It would not compete with the dwelling or appear prominent in the wider landscape.
- 6.22. The garden store therefore represents a proportionate and well-designed ancillary building consistent with Core Policy 57 and the design objectives of the Framework.

North Wessex Downs National Landscape

- 6.23. The site lies within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. Great weight must therefore be given to conserving and enhancing its landscape and scenic beauty.
- 6.24. The proposal is limited in scale and closely related to an existing dwelling. The retrospective use relates to a small parcel whose physical appearance has been established for more than ten years, while the only new built form is a modest domestic store on existing hardstanding.
- 6.25. The site is visually contained by the dwelling, mature hedges, fencing, trees and the existing landform. The store would not be prominent in wider views and would not interrupt the open character of the surrounding agricultural landscape.
- 6.26. The traditional materials, low roof form and recessive siting ensure that the building responds appropriately to the rural context. The proposal neither extends the domestic boundary beyond the line established in 2014 nor introduces activity of a different scale or character.
- 6.27. The proposal consequently conserves the character and scenic quality of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and accords with Core Policy 51.

Conservation Area and Heritage

- 6.28. The Ogbourne St George Conservation Area includes only the northern end of the established access track. The dwelling, the southern garden parcel and the proposed garden store are all outside the designated area.
- 6.29. No works are proposed to the access or within the Conservation Area. The longstanding domestic use and the proposed store are remote from the designated boundary and contained within the immediate setting of Meadow Cottage.
- 6.30. The proposal would therefore preserve the character, appearance and significance of the Conservation Area and accords with Core Policy 58.

Flood Risk

- 6.31. Part of the existing access track passes through land identified as Flood Zones 2 and 3. This is an established access and no alteration to it is proposed.
- 6.32. The southern parcel and the proposed garden store lie outside the higher-risk flood zones. The store would occupy existing permeable gravel hardstanding and would not obstruct flood flows or materially increase surface-water runoff.
- 6.33. The proposal is therefore safe from flooding and would not increase flood risk elsewhere, in accordance with Core Policy 67 and national policy.

Highway Safety, Parking and Manoeuvring

- 6.34. The application does not alter the existing access, generate a separate use or materially increase vehicle movements. The land would continue to serve the dwelling and the garden store would be used for domestic storage.
- 6.35. The store is retained in its original position on the southern hardstanding. It does not occupy the principal route through the site and preserves the established space available for parking and manoeuvring.
- 6.36. There would consequently be no adverse effect on highway safety or the practical operation of the access and parking arrangements.

Residential Amenity

- 6.37. The garden store is modest, non-habitable and contained within the application property. Its siting, scale and use would not result in overlooking, loss of privacy, overbearing effects, noise or other disturbance to neighbouring occupiers.
- 6.38. The proposal would therefore preserve residential amenity.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 6.39. The application site extends to approximately 0.15 hectares within the submitted red-line boundary. Since 6 August 2026, developments with a red-line site area of 0.2 hectares or below are exempt from the statutory biodiversity net gain requirement.
- 6.40. The proposed garden store would occupy existing gravel hardstanding and no priority habitat is proposed to be removed or otherwise negatively affected. The application is therefore exempt from mandatory biodiversity net gain.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. Full planning permission is sought for the retrospective change of use of the southern parcel from agricultural land to residential garden land associated with Meadow Cottage and for the erection of a garden store.
- 7.2. The evidence demonstrates that the parcel was acquired and incorporated into the domestic setting during 2014 and certainly by May 2015. The use has continued for more than ten years and is considered immune from enforcement. A lawful development certificate is a genuine fallback, although this application provides the more direct means of resolving both the existing use and the proposed building together.
- 7.3. The physical landscape effects of the change of use occurred more than a decade ago. The boundary planting has matured and the parcel has assimilated into the setting of Meadow Cottage without harm to the wider field or the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.
- 7.4. The proposed garden store is modest, subordinate and appropriately designed. It would occupy existing hardstanding in a position that the Council has already confirmed raises no significant siting concern, while preserving access, parking and manoeuvring.
- 7.5. The proposal would conserve landscape character, preserve the nearby Conservation Area, avoid flood and highway impacts, and safeguard residential amenity. It accords with the National Planning Policy Framework and Core Policies 51, 57, 58 and 67 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.
- 7.6. There are no material considerations that indicate permission should be withheld. The Council is therefore respectfully invited to grant planning permission.

8. Use of Artificial Intelligence

- 8.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared having regard to the Planning Inspectorate's guidance on the transparent use of artificial intelligence in planning submissions and the Royal Town Planning Institute's professional advice on the responsible use of AI.
- 8.2. Artificial intelligence tools were used solely to assist with formatting and the clarity of written expression. All planning assessment, policy interpretation, professional judgement and conclusions have been undertaken by an experienced planning professional. The author has reviewed the document in full and accepts responsibility for the accuracy, content and professional opinions expressed.