

FULL PLANNING APPLICATION. CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2025/08773
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full Planning
SITE ADDRESS:	Lower Dunge Farm, Bratton Road, West Ashton, Trowbridge, BA14 6AX.
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Erection of livestock building, agricultural storage building and associated works.
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve with Conditions.

PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks planning permission for the construction of two agricultural barns for the purposes of keeping livestock and agricultural storage. The site already has an existing barn located on it with the proposals being located to the west of this existing building. The scheme would also create its own attenuation pond area as shown on the plans below.

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The site consists of agricultural land to the southeast of West Ashton and is located off the Bratton Road, with one barn already being located on the site. The site location is near to Oakstone Farm, which is an existing poultry farm to the immediate northwest of the site. The site has its own existing access and entrance and there are no nearby public rights of way.

The site is located within the Salisbury Plain SPA 6400m buffer and within the 'Yellow' zone of the adopted Trowbridge Westbury Bat Mitigation Strategy (TWBMS) relating to areas at medium risk for habitat loss and increased pressure from recreational impacts.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
14/09416/AGD A purpose built portal lean-to to the existing building Prior Approval not required.

RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Wiltshire Core Strategy:

- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
- Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Core Policy 51: Landscape
- Core Policy 58: Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment
- Core Policy 61: Transport and New Development
- Core Policy 64: Demand Management
- Core Policy 67: Flood Risk

West Ashton 'Made' Neighbourhood Plan

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

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The Planning Practice Guidance

National Design Guide

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. It will now be subject to a legal process to finalise its withdrawal - which is likely to happen in July or August (2026). The said Plan has no material weight for the purposes of this application.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

West Ashton Parish Council: No comments.

Highways: No objections.

Ecology: No objections subject to condition.

Drainage: No objections.

Landscape: No objections.

Public Protection: No objections.

Rights of Way: No response

REPRESENTATIONS

One email of response received raising the following points:

- The applicants should have undertaken a pre-application consultation with near neighbours, prior to formal submission, as is best planning practice.
- No explicit mention or acknowledgement of Cresswell Farm, which is located circa 365m to the northeast of the proposed development.
- Existing external lighting intrusive.
- Size and scale of the proposal is incongruous in this part of the countryside which is characterised by sporadic smaller scale vernacular farmsteads.
- Potential for adverse odour impacts.
- Application be refused or be withdrawn and located elsewhere.

PRINCIPLE OF THE PROPOSAL.

The principle of the proposed scheme is acceptable for the reasons as discussed below. The land is of agricultural status with an agricultural barn already being located on site, the proposed addition of the two barns would be in keeping with the agricultural use, subject to full consideration of the various planning aspects as discussed below.

ASSESSMENT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

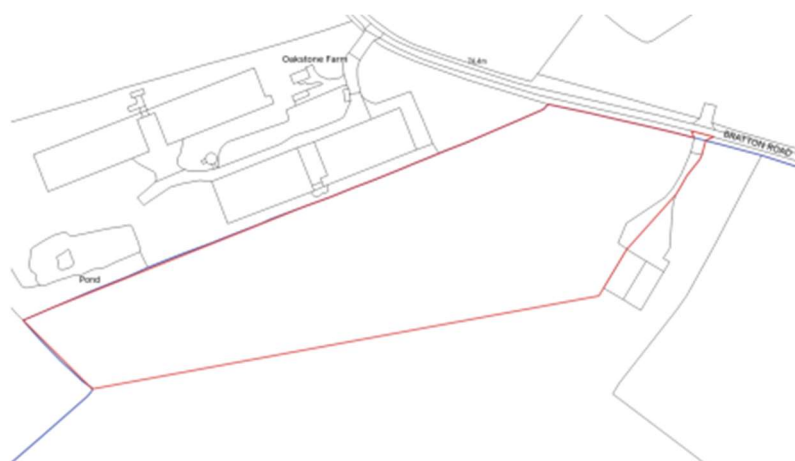
"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

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 the 'Made' Neighbourhood Plan for West Ashton.

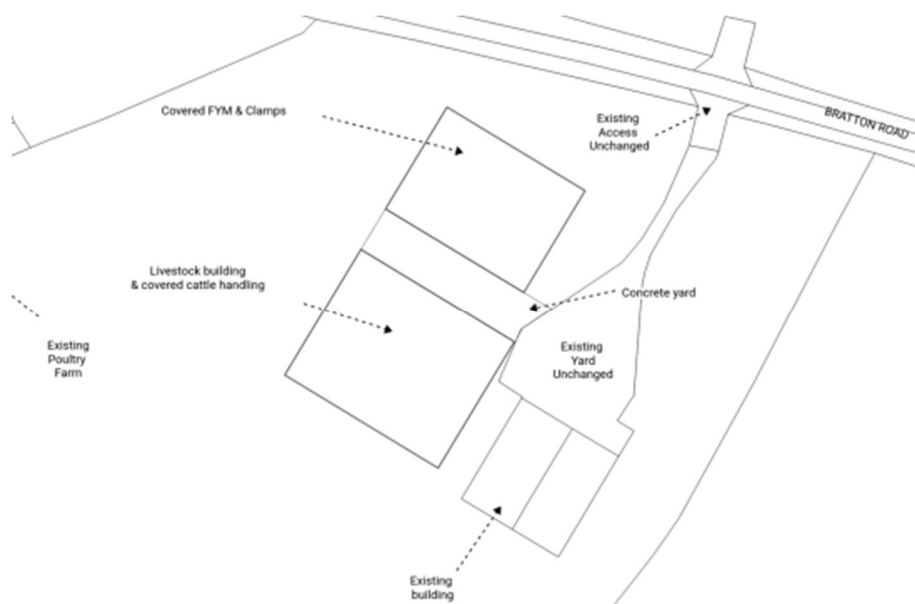
Design and Impact upon the upon the character and context of the area

Core Policy 57 - Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that all new development is of high design quality, reflecting local context, character, and distinctiveness.

The proposals can be viewed within the plan snippets taken from the submitted plans:

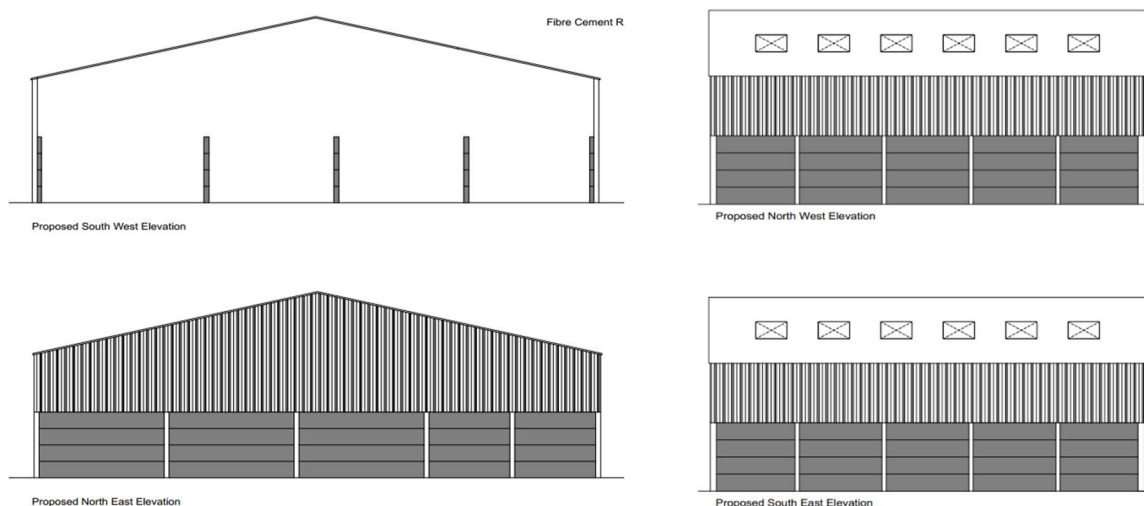


Location Plan



Block Plan.

The proposal would see the siting and construction of two barns, one is described as an agricultural storage barn and the other as a livestock barn. The storage building will accommodate a Farmyard Manure (FYM) store and three silage clamps to support the livestock enterprise. A separate manure management plan has been submitted which consists of the manure's re-use as a natural fertiliser. The other livestock building provides a livestock housing area which would incorporate an additional covered cattle handling area within the same structure. This integrated design allows all cattle operations to take place under cover, removing the need for any external handling areas and enhancing animal welfare, operational efficiency, and environmental protection. The barns are of a standard agricultural steel portal framed design, constructed with concrete panel lower side walls with metal clad upper walls painted Juniper green. The roof would have a fibre cement covering, the following plan snippets show the storage barn's proposed elevations:



Proposed Barn Elevations.

The proposal's design and choice of materials is considered to be wholly appropriate, with the scheme complying 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 adjacent farm to the site is Oakstone Farm, whose planning history shows past consents, one of which was for an agricultural worker's dwelling, the council's aerial photograph appears to show a building to the north of the site which could be utilised as accommodation. The separation distance between this building and the proposed two barns is in excess of 200 metres, with this distance being intersected by an extant large commercial building located to the south of and within the Oakstone site. There is also extensive mature vegetation boundary treatment on the southern aspect which further safeguards these amenities. Therefore, for these reasons, it is appraised that there would not be a significantly harmful impact on the amenities of Oakstone Farm from the proposals.

Third party comments have also raised the presence of Cresswell Down Farm, which is located 395 metres to the immediate northeast, with this distance being intersected by the main highway of Bratton Road. For the same described reasons relating to separation distance, it is appraised that there would not be any harmful impacts on this property by the proposed use of the site. Both farms were sent neighbour notification letters.

Third party concern has been received regarding possible adverse odours from the proposals, whilst such concerns are understood, the councils Environmental Public Protection department has been consulted, who have not raised any concerns or objections, nor asked for any conditions. As previously noted, Oakstone Farm is an existing chicken farm adjacent to the site, which has its own pond to its immediate west.

Concern has also been highlighted regarding possible nuisance external lighting; such aspects would be controlled by the standard ecology condition in regard to lighting.

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

Landscape.

An initial consultation was carried out with the council's landscape officer, who, whilst not raising an objection in principle commented that the proposals would increase the size of the existing farm complex leading to an intensification of agricultural built form. The officer further commented that due to the site's baseline character, as well as the site's low-lying position and the proposal's high level of visual containment within the local landscape, the site would not be perceived as an unexpected or incongruous feature in the landscape and would retain the landscape's established character.

The Landscape Officer requested an updated landscaping plan, which was supplied and which was acceptable for the purposes of visual mitigation of the proposed works. The scheme included various planting which supplemented and strengthened the existing hedgerows, together with a new hedgerow to the immediate south of the proposals. The landscaping plan snippet below shows the accepted works:



The Council's Landscape Officer offered the final comments:

'I have reviewed the landscape mitigation plan and I am happy to remove my holding objection to the scheme on Landscape grounds. I would request that WC2 standard condition is used to cover the establishment and maintenance of the landscape mitigation planting for any proposed approval of the scheme'

Condition WC2 states the following:

All soft landscaping comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the first occupation of the building(s) or the completion of the development whichever is the sooner; All shrubs, trees and hedge planting shall be maintained free from weeds and shall be protected from damage by vermin and stock. Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years, die, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced

in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority. All hard landscaping shall also be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a programme to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory landscaped setting for the development and the protection of existing important landscape features.

The above condition is considered to be necessary and reasonable, in regard to the amenities of the site and has been applied and has been appropriately applied to the application..

Ecology Matters.

The WCS, through Core Policy 50, states that development proposals are expected to avoid and reduce disturbance of sensitive wildlife species and habitats. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) was established as a mandatory aspect of planning evaluation through Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021 Schedule 14). The application has included an ecological appraisal and consequently the Ecology section of the council were consulted.

The site lies within the Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area (SPA) 6.4km buffer zone and also within the grey and yellow zones of the Trowbridge & Westbury Bat Mitigation Strategy (TWBMS), which has the potential to result in significant adverse impact on the special features of the Bath & Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The application was therefore considered under the Habitats Regulations, where a test of likely significance was 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).

In regard to the Salisbury Plain SPA, it was concluded that given the scale and nature of the development (with there not being any overnight accommodation created), that there was no mechanism for adverse effect. The Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) has concluded that the application is not likely to have significant impacts on Salisbury Plain SPA and subsequently the application is screened out of Appropriate Assessment.

In terms of the TWBMS and also the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC), it was further concluded that given the scale and nature of the proposed development which (i) involves no overall loss of a roost of a qualifying species, (ii) does not propose the removal of any bat habitat, and (iii) does not propose any additional external lighting, there was no mechanism for adverse impact on the Conservation Objectives of the SAC. As such the principles of the TWBMS were not considered further and the application was n screened out of Appropriate Assessment with respect to the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bat SAC.

Whilst no objections have been received for this consultation, an initial ecology response requested a Construction Environment Method Plan (CEMP) to be provided by a planning condition. The applicant chose to supply this information prior to determination of the application, therefore with the CEMP being provided; accordingly, a re-consultation process with the ecology officer was undertaken, who was satisfied with the submission, thereby negating the need for a pre-commencement condition. Comments from the Ecology Officer have confirmed that the document is sufficient to provide protection during the construction process, and as such the document would be conditioned to ensure that the measures are carried out and complied with in full.

In terms of BNG matters, a statutory biodiversity metric calculation, has been submitted, confirming the site's baseline and predicted post-development biodiversity units, the final consultation response received from the Ecology Officer has confirmed that such details are acceptable. Final conditions

relating to lighting of the site and compliance with the submitted documents have been requested, which are considered to be reasonable and necessary.

Drainage Matters.

The proposed site is in Flood Zone 1 and is not subject to surface water or groundwater flood risk. Core Policy 67 of the WCS provides detail on the management of flooding in association with new development. The policy states that new development will include measures to reduce rainwater run-off, and the incorporation of sustainable drainage systems. The NPPF sets out the application of a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of new development in paragraph 172.

The consultation received from the Council drainage officer stated no objections and requested that a planning condition relating to the submission of a scheme for drainage water strategy be submitted prior to commencement of works. The applicant chose to submit such details whilst the application was live and being processed, therefore the council drainage officer was re-consulted on the submitted information, who was satisfied with the information and raised no further objections. It is considered necessary and relevant to condition such matters accordingly, to ensure compliance.

Highway Matters.

Core Policy 57 (xiv) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that development must meet the requirements of Core Policy 61. This policy requires proposals to be capable of being served by safe access to the highway network. Core Policy 64 seeks to ensure compliance with parking standards set out in the Local Transport Plan.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly Paragraph 115 and 116, requires that development proposals do not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety and that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users.

The proposed development would continue to use the established site access which would not be altered and would not have any adverse impact on highway safety. Adequate parking and turning provision is provided within the site and such access arrangements are acceptable. The council's highways officer has been consulted who has not raised any objections.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Core Policies 57 (xiv), 61 and 64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the NPPF, and the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan.

Other Matters.

A third-party representation has commented that the applicants should have undertaken a pre-application consultation with nearby neighbours, prior to formal submission, as is recommended by best planning practice. Whilst such pre-application consultations have not taken place, neighbours were notified by letter and given the opportunity to comment on the application.

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 highway safety, 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: Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to conditions.