

APPLICATION FOR FULL-PLANNING PERMISSION

CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2025/08826
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Upper Greenhill Farm, Royal Wootton Bassett, Swindon, SN4 7QR
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Erection of a single-storey ancillary agricultural office (factory-made Dunster cabin)
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve with Conditions

1 SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

The application relates to Upper Greenhill Farm near Royal Wootton Bassett. The site is in the open countryside. The site falls wholly within Flood Zone 1 and is not identified at risk of surface or ground water flooding. The site is not subject to any landscape or ecological designations. PROW WBAS32 runs parallel to the southern site boundary extending to the east. Substantial priority habitat woodland and parcel of ancient & semi-ancient woodland, at 'Cliffe Pypard Wood' is located approximately 50m to the south and extends away from the site.

The application seeks permission for the erection of a single storey cabin building to serve as an ancillary farm office. The building is intended to support the day-to-day running of the farm. It is stated that the holding produces hay for sale, manages environmental stewardship commitments, and carries out a range of conservation work.

The building would measure approximately 6m x 3m and would be clad in horizontal pressure treated wood cladding. The roof would be tongue and groove boarding covered in black roof felt.

2 PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
N/01/01852/COU - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 28/9/2001 – CONVERSION OF PART OF EXISTING BUILDING FOR HOLIDAY LETS
N/96/01308/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Unknown Date: 2/9/1996 – CHANGE OF USE OF CATTLE SHED AND STORE ROOM TO OFFICE AND LOOSE BOXES/CREATION OF OUTDOOR RIDING ARENA WITH LIGHTING COU OF CATTLE SHED & STORE RM
N/01/01851/COU - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 27/9/2001 – CONVERSION OF EXISTING BUILDING FOR HOLIDAY LETS
N/01/00942/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 1/6/2001 – EXTENSION & ALTERATIONS TO PROVIDE SELF-CONTAINED RESIDENTIAL ANNEXE FOR ELDERLY PARENTS

N/90/02042/OUT - Outline Planning Decision - Approved Date: 8/10/1990 – CONSTRUCTION OF 18 HOLE GOLF COURSE, CLUB HOUSE, CAR PARKING, ACCESS AND ASSOCIATED WORKS
19/09900/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 26/2/2020 – Proposed change of use of land to residential and erection of a swimming pool, paved area and small pool house set within a walled enclosure
19/10127/LBC - Listed building consent Decision - Approved Date: 26/2/2020 – Proposed change of use of land to residential and erection of a swimming pool, paved area and small pool house set within a walled enclosure
PL/2025/06264 - Prior notification: Building Decision - Prior Approval Refused Date: 4/8/2025 – Single storey, timber agricultural office for day-to-day farm admin activities.

3 RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

Development Plan:

The development plan for Wiltshire comprises the *Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)* (*adopted January 2015*) and any made neighbourhood plans, which remains the principal statutory planning document guiding development across the county. In line with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Though the development plan is considered as a whole, those parts deemed to be particularly relevant to this application are listed below:

The adopted *Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)*, with particular regard to:

- Core Policy 1 Settlement Strategy
- Core Policy 2 Delivery Strategy
- Core Policy 19 Spatial Strategy: Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade Community Area
- Core Policy 34 Additional Employment Land
- Core Policy 48 Supporting Rural Life
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Core Policy 51 Landscape
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
- Core Policy 60 Sustainable Transport
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development
- Core Policy 67 Flood Risk

Draft Wiltshire Local Plan

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

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

Neighbourhood Plan: Royal Wootton Bassett Neighbourhood Plan

Supplementary Planning Documents and other Guidance:

- Wiltshire Design Guide (adopted April 2024)
- National Design Guide

4 ISSUES

The main issues that need to be addressed in this case include:

- Principle of Development
- Visual Impact and Residential Amenity
- Access and Parking
- Ecology, Biodiversity and Arboricultural Impact
- Flood Risk and Drainage

5 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council: No objection

6 REPRESENTATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), the application was publicised by way of:

- Neighbour notification letters sent to adjoining and nearby properties;

These methods were used to inform interested parties and provide a period of 21 days for comments to be submitted.

No comments have been received.

7 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 Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and, where applicable, any made Neighbourhood Plans. Consideration has also been given to the policies of the NPPF (NPPF) as a material consideration in the assessment.

The assessment below considers each of the main issues identified above. Each topic is assessed in turn with reference to the relevant policy context, the evidence submitted, consultee responses, and all other material considerations, before a conclusion is reached.

7.1 Principle of Development

Core Policies 1 and 2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy establish the overarching spatial strategy for Wiltshire and provide the primary Development Plan framework for determining whether development is appropriately located. Together, these policies seek to direct growth towards the most sustainable locations whilst protecting the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. The strategy prioritises development within Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres and larger villages, whilst development in the countryside will only be supported where it accords with specific development plan policies or where material considerations indicate otherwise.

The NPPF also contains national policies relating to the location of development. Policies S3-S5 distinguish between development within settlements and development in the countryside, support sustainable patterns of growth, and require decisions to have regard to the role and function of settlements, accessibility to services and facilities, and other site-specific considerations.

The development occurs within the open countryside where development should be strictly controlled. In accordance with the NPPF development for the purposes of agriculture should be approved unless the benefits are substantially outweighed by adverse effects

The application relates to development in connection with the existing agricultural operation at the farm. There is no in principle objection to the development of buildings at this farm where they are justified. During the course of the application additional information was requested in relation to the nature of the business and reasoning for the chosen location for the office beyond the existing farmyard.

The applicant has explained that the proposed site is considered the only realistic position for the office on the basis that the farmyard needs to remain clear for tractors and machinery and that the garden of the property is a family space with mature fruit trees, planting and wildlife

habitat that would be lost. The proposed location is close to the farmstead being able to connect to existing electricity and internet services with minimal disruption and is described as being on an area of land with limited grazing or ecological value. As a result, the proposed site is stated to be the most practical and least disruptive option available.

Under the circumstances described, and given the modest scale and nature of the development, it is accepted that the modest encroachment of built form into the adjoining field is reasonably justified.

Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural

Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land comprises Grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification system and represents the most productive and versatile land for food production.

Policy N2 (Improving the Natural Environment) of the NPPF requires decision-makers to take account of the quality of agricultural land, including land classified as Best and Most Versatile agricultural land and its grade. Where significant development of agricultural land is necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be used in preference to higher quality land where possible.

According to the DEFRA Predictive Agricultural Land Classification Map for England the application site falls within 3b class, so not BMV in planning terms. In this case the proposal involves a small area of the existing paddock with no additional hardstanding or infrastructure that would result in the loss of land or impact the existing productivity of the wider parcel. There is no change of use from agricultural involved.

Having regard to the above, it is not considered that there would be a significant change in the productivity of the agricultural land or loss of BMV.

Subject to the assessment against other relevant Development Plan policies, national policy and material considerations, the principle of development is considered acceptable.

7.2 Visual Impact and Residential Amenity

Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to achieve a high standard of design that responds positively to local character, context and distinctiveness. Core Policy 51 requires development to protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance landscape character.

Policies DP1-DP4 of the NPPF seek to ensure that development is well-designed, visually attractive, sustainable and responsive to its surroundings. Development should contribute positively to local character, create high-quality places and support healthy and inclusive communities. Policy N2 recognise the need to protect the natural beauty of the countryside.

The Wiltshire Design Guide provides further guidance on achieving high quality, context-led design and should be taken into account where relevant.

On consideration of the submitted details, it is considered that the design of the cabin is relatively unobtrusive, constructed out of suitable materials and of fitting scale and height. The building is positioned so that there would be no unacceptable or significant adverse impact on residential amenities or the character and appearance of the area. There are limited views from public vantage points.

There are no impacts to the PRow which lies outside of the site boundary.

Having regard to the above, it is considered that the proposal would comply with CP51, 57 and the relevant requirements of the NPPF.

7.3 Access and Parking

Policies TR3-TR8 of the NPPF seek to ensure that development is supported by safe, suitable and sustainable transport arrangements. Development should provide appropriate access, promote sustainable travel choices where possible and avoid unacceptable impacts on highway safety and the operation of the transport network.

Core Policies 60-64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy require development to provide safe access, promote sustainable transport, minimise transport impacts and provide appropriate parking arrangements.

No new or altered access is proposed, with movements continuing to use the existing farm entrance. The office would be accessed on foot from within the holding and the cabin would be positioned approximately 3 metres behind the carriageway, with no impact upon visibility of road users. Parking and turning would remain within the farmyard and the proposal would not generate additional vehicle movements.

Having regard to the above, it is considered that the highways impacts are acceptable.

7.4 Ecology, Biodiversity and Arboricultural Impact

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to protect and, where appropriate, enhance biodiversity and geodiversity interests.

Policy N2 of the NPPF seeks to conserve and enhance biodiversity, support nature recovery, protect habitats and species, and strengthen ecological networks.

Where relevant, proposals should assess impacts upon protected species, habitats, ecological networks and green and blue infrastructure and demonstrate that any adverse impacts can be appropriately avoided, mitigated or compensated for.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is mandatory for most development and proposals should demonstrate compliance with the statutory requirements unless an exemption applies.

The proposal falls below the BNG de minimis exemption and so no metric or related information has been requested. The applicant proposes to install wildlife boxes which will provide some enhancement in the interests of wildlife at the site. There is no physical impact to existing trees

and hedgerows and with no lighting proposed there is no risk to light spill impacting sensitive wildlife features. A condition can be included to prevent the installation of external lighting without details of a wildlife sensitive scheme first being considered and approved by the LPA.

Having regard to the above, it is considered that subject to conditions, the proposal would comply with CP50 and relevant NPPF requirements.

7.5 Flood Risk and Drainage

Core Policy 67 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that development is appropriately located and designed to avoid increasing flood risk on-site or elsewhere. Sustainable drainage measures should be incorporated where appropriate.

Policies F4-F8 of the NPPF require flood risk to be taken into account in planning decisions and seek to ensure that development is safe for its lifetime, does not increase flood risk elsewhere and incorporates appropriate drainage measures.

The application site falls within FZ1 and is not identified as being at risk of surface or ground water flooding. The proposal involved a modest timber building with no additional hardstanding areas associated with it. Based on the information submitted it is not considered that the proposal would lead to any increase in flood risk on or off the site. Measures for dealing with roof drainage will be dealt with via the building regulations process (as appropriate).

8 Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

In reaching this decision, due regard has been had to the Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This requires the Local Planning Authority to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the proposal would not result in any unlawful discrimination and that any impacts on protected groups have been appropriately considered as part of this assessment.

9 CONCLUSION

The application seeks development in connection with the existing agricultural operation at the farm. As such, there is no objection to the development in principle. The proposal would result in a modest encroachment into the field. However, a reasonable justification has been provided for the proposed siting in relation to the operational needs of the holding. The building would support the ongoing administration and management of the farm and, given its limited scale and relatively contained impact, the proposal is considered acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to the following conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

Location Plan
(received 5 November 2025)

Proposed Elevations and Floor Plan
(received 1 April 2026)

Site Plan
(received 23 July 2026)

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. The building shall be used as a farm office and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in Class E of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) (or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification).

REASON: Alternative uses in the open countryside location would need to be considered having regard to the circumstances of the case.

4. No external lighting shall be installed within the application site unless and until details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any external lighting shall be fitted with passive infrared (PIR) motion sensors and shall only illuminate when activated by movement and shall not be continuously illuminated.

REASON: To protect the rural character of the area and wildlife interests.

INFORMATIVES

WP6, WP18, BNG