

APPLICATION FOR FULL-PLANNING PERMISSION

DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/02658
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Unit 3 Moonraker Farm, Gastard
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Retrospective change of use and conversion of part of Hut 3 from car storage (B8) to car valeting (Sui Generis)
RECOMMENDATION:	Approved with Conditions

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

Moonraker Farm is located to the north-east of the village of Gastard. The site is not subject to any statutory landscape, heritage or ecological designations, and lies outside of the Green Belt, National Landscape and Gastard Conservation Area. There are no Listed Buildings within the site. The site is within Flood Zone 1.

Public Right of Way (CORM17) is situated approximately 37m north-west of the application site. Gastard Meadows County Wildlife Site is situated approximately 253m north-west of the site.

The Gastard Conservation Area and several listed buildings are located approximately 150m to the south; however, given the separation distance, the presence of intervening development and the position of the application unit on the northern side of the existing farm complex, it is not considered that the proposal would affect the significance or setting of these heritage assets.

The application relates to the retrospective change of use of a section of unit 3 at Moonraker Farm, Gastard, from car storage (B8) to car valeting (sui generis).

The valeting business Bath Bespoke Detailing were established in 2020 and have occupied part of unit 3 as a tenant since 2024. The business is a sole trader and the business offers car cleaning/valeting services for prestige classic cars and cars of high value. The majority of the time there is one person operating the business at the site, but the applicant has confirmed that on occasion someone helps to move cars or assists with applying paint protection films. The business also operate a mobile service where they travel to the customer's location – in these cases the unit is not in use. The applicant is the key operator and on average works on one car per week. Three cars are currently stored in the unit, with space for one car to be worked on at a time.

Moonraker Farm was originally a poultry farm but the majority of the site now has a lawful commercial classic car storage use which has been in operation over in excess of 20 years. This application seeks planning permission to use part of unit 3 for a car valeting use. Access to the unit is via the main site entrance off Gastard Lane.

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
14/04904/CLE - Lawful development: Existing use Decision - Approved Date: 27/6/2014 – Certificate of Lawfulness For Use of Former Agricultural Buildings for Commercial Storage
18/12103/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 13/3/2019 – Extension to x 3 storage sheds and replacement of x 2 storage sheds in association with existing self storage business.
PL/2022/09590 - Prior approval Part 14 Class J: Installation or alteration etc of solar equipment on non-domestic premises Decision - Prior Approval Refused Date: 8/2/2023 – Prior approval for the installation of Photovoltaic (PV) Solar Panels to the roof of buildings at Moonraker Farm, Wiltshire
PL/2023/03023 - Prior approval Part 14 Class J: Installation or alteration etc of solar equipment on non-domestic premises Decision - Approve Date: 15/6/2023 – Prior approval for the installation of Photovoltaic (PV) Solar Panels to the roof of buildings at Moonraker Farm

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

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 11 Spatial Strategy Corsham
- Core Policy 34 Additional Employment Land
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development;
- Core Policy 64 Demand Management.

Corsham Neighbourhood Plan:

- BE1 – Business and Economy
- HE1 – Design and heritage

ISSUES

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

- Whether the development is acceptable in principle (CP1, CP2 and BE1)
- Whether the scheme constitutes high quality design (CP 57 and HE1)
- Whether the scheme would have an acceptable impact upon the reasonable living conditions of the adjoining occupants (CP 57)
- Whether the proposal would have a negative effect upon highway safety, including if there is sufficient parking for the proposed development (CP 61 and 64)
- Whether there would be any harmful impacts upon protected species or priority habitats (CP 50)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The views of consultees are material considerations in the determination of the application. However, the decision-maker must exercise their own planning judgement. Where consultees raise concerns or recommend conditions, these have been considered and are addressed within the assessment section of this report.

Corsham Town Council: No objection.

Council Highway Engineer: No objection:

The site is located with existing access onto Gastard Lane, an unclassified section of public highway subject to a speed limit of 60mph. There are no proposals to alter the existing access which would be considered suitable for the change of use.

The proposal seeks retrospective permission for a change of use from B8 storage to vehicle repairs for part of an existing storage building. The floor area is stated as some 106sqm.

There are 2 vehicle parking spaces detailed on the plans with space for turning to enable access and egress with the public highway at the existing access in a forward gear. The vehicle parking caters for the employee and a single customer, which is suitable as the operation is such that visits to the site by customers are by appointment only.

A single employee is indicated within the application which limits the number of vehicles being valeted within the working day and therefore limits the vehicle movements to/from the site. It has been stated that a single vehicle per week is usually the level of work carried out.

The retrospective change of use would not be considered of detriment to the public highway given the scale of development and constraints limiting customer attendance. Therefore, there would not be a highways objection raised.

NOTE: The reference to "vehicle repairs" within the Highway Engineer consultation response is an administrative error. The consultation was undertaken on the current proposal for car valeting/detailing and the Highway Engineer's conclusions relate to the development proposed under this application.

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 notification letters sent to adjoining and nearby properties. This methods were used to inform interested parties and provide a period of 21 days for comments to be submitted.

Three representations have been received from two different third parties. Below is a summary of the representations received:

- Representations cite no problems experienced by the applicant's valeting service and the current level of vehicle movements.
- The main concern raised by all representations is if a different valeting business were to take over where a significant increase of vehicle movements were to occur.
- A vehicle repair business which was granted consent (PL/2025/09723) has considerably increased the amount of traffic in Gastard Lane. Concern for the cumulative impact of both businesses if the valeting were to be more intensive.
- Requests for conditions to restrict the use to the existing business. Request for new application to be required if the business ceases trading and a different business wishes to operate from the premises. A personal permission or similar condition to restrict the business from becoming more intensive also suggested.
- For information of the existing valeting use details have been provided from the applicant's website – "As of February 2024, we now operate our Detailing, Paint Correction, Ceramic Coating and PPF services"
- Other conditions as applied to PL/2025/09723 may be relevant.
- Queries about lack of site notice – some people living in the vicinity may not be aware of the application. – *Officer comment: letters have been sent to all neighbours closest to the site*
- Current site well maintained by applicant.

Only material planning considerations have been taken into account in the assessment of this application. Non-material issues, such as property values or private legal disputes, cannot be considered in the determination process. Representations have been received from three members of the public. Each material planning issue raised is addressed within the assessment 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 Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and, where applicable, any made Neighbourhood Plans. Consideration has also been given to the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (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.

Principle of development

CP1 and CP2 seek to ensure that new development is strategically located, sustainable, and supports the character and function of Wiltshire's communities. CP11 sets out the spatial strategy for the Corsham Community Area.

The application site is located within the open countryside, and forms part of an established complex of buildings in commercial use, with a certificate of lawfulness being granted in 2014 for a commercial storage use in the building. The proposal seeks the retrospective change of use of part of unit 3 from its lawful use as car storage (use class B8) to a car valeting service (sui generis).

CP34 supports employment development associated with new and existing rural based businesses within or adjacent to large or small villages. This policy seeks to support the diversification of the rural economy. The proposal would utilise an existing building within an established employment complex and would contribute to the continued operation and diversification of rural business activity.

Policy BE1 to the Corsham Neighbourhood Plan is supportive of employment related development proposals which are sustainably located so as to strengthen and support the growth of Corsham's economy will be supported, particularly where the provision of new jobs for local people or business start-up units and/or growth in the innovation, education and knowledge sectors are being proposed and the inward investment for local business has been demonstrated.

The site lies just outside of Gastard (defined in the WCS as a small village) and is already in employment use. The proposal does not involve new built development or the expansion of the site, but rather the re-use of an existing unit for an alternative commercial purpose. As such, it is considered to represent a sustainable form of employment development in this location and is acceptable in principle.

Given there is existing employment use on the site, the proposed use is considered a compatible alternative use in this location. The proposed use is sui generis, which would not benefit from any flexible move within a use class or any permitted development rights. In the

interests of certainty and to enable appropriate control over the use of the site, a condition will be imposed restricting the use of the relevant part of Unit 3 solely to the car valeting operation (including detailing, paint correction and relevant works) hereby approved.

Design and appearance

WCS Core Policy 57 requires new development to be of a high standard of design and requires development to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complimentary to the locality. Amongst other matters, the policy requires development to respond positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials streetscape and rooflines, to integrate the building into its setting effectively. Policy HE1 to the Corsham neighbourhood Plan requires all new development to demonstrate good quality design.

The proposal involves no external alterations, and consequently there is no impact on the design and impact of the character and appearance of the area. The proposal accords with CP57 to the WCS and policy HE1 to the CNP.

Amenity

CP57 also states that development should have regard to the compatibility of adjoining buildings and uses, the impact on the amenities of existing occupants and ensuring that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself. The NPPF also states that planning decisions should create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

The application relates solely to the change of use of part of an existing unit within an established commercial complex and does not involve any external alterations to the building. As such, the proposal would not give rise to impacts commonly associated with physical development, such as overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of light, overshadowing, or overbearing effects.

The nearest residential neighbours to the building are approximately 44m to the north, on the opposite side of the road. The principal consideration therefore relates to the potential for noise and disturbance arising from the proposed use, together with any associated vehicle movements

The proposed operation comprises vehicle valeting and detailing business undertaken predominantly by a sole operator. Given the relatively small scale of the building and the information submitted (as well as the services advertised by the business), it can be inferred that the business is of a relatively small scale and that the activities undertaken within the unit will principally comprise vehicle washing and cleaning, interior valeting, paint decontamination, machine polishing, paint correction, ceramic coating applications and other vehicle appearance enhancement treatments. These activities are typically undertaken on one vehicle at a time over prolonged periods and do not involve vehicle servicing, mechanical repairs, bodyshop operations, spray painting, welding or other industrial processes typically associated with elevated noise levels.

Given the limited scale of the activity, the separation distance to neighbouring dwellings, and the site's established employment use, it is not considered that the proposal would generate noise or disturbance to a degree that it would result in unacceptable harm to amenity. It is also noted that the applicant has been operating from the site since 2024, and no objections have been received from neighbouring residents in relation to its operation.

The proposed opening hours of 07:00 to 18:00 are considered to be reasonable within the context of an existing commercial site and given the scale and nature of the activities proposed, are not considered likely to result in adverse impacts on neighbours.

It is considered appropriate to impose conditions restricting both the nature of the activities undertaken and the scale of the operation. These controls will ensure that the use remains a low-intensity vehicle valeting and detailing business and cannot materially intensify without further assessment by the Local Planning Authority.

Overall, subject to appropriate conditions being imposed the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the existing living conditions of nearby residents, and would accord with CP57 of the WCS.

Highways and parking

CP61 Transport and New Development, inter alia, aims to ensure that the proposal is capable of being served by safe access to the highway network. CP64 Demand Management, inter alia, aims to ensure that adequate parking is provided

The proposal seeks retrospective permission for a change of use from B8 storage to a small-scale valeting business for part of an existing storage building. The application building is accessed via the existing access onto Gastard Lane, an unclassified section of public highway subject to a speed limit of 60mph. There are no proposals to alter the existing access.

The submitted plans show 2 vehicle parking spaces, with space for turning to enable access and egress with the public highway at the existing access in a forward gear. The vehicle parking caters for the employee and a single customer, which is suitable as the operation is such that visits to the site by customers are by appointment only.

Whilst a number of vehicles may be present within the unit at any one time, the business is operated on a small scale, predominantly by a sole operator with only occasional assistance from a second person, which limits the number of vehicles being valeted within the working day and therefore limits the vehicle movements to and from the site. It has been stated that on average a single vehicle per week is usually the level of work carried out.

The Council's Highway Engineer has been consulted and raises no objection to the proposal. Having regard to the modest scale of the operation, the existing access, sufficient parking and turning space, and limited traffic associated with the use, it is not considered that the proposal would have any adverse impact on highway safety.

It is noted that a number of members of the public raise concerns that should the unit be occupied by a different operator in the future, the intensity of the use and associated vehicle movements could increase beyond those currently proposed. These concerns are acknowledged and in the interest of protecting residential amenity and maintaining highway

safety, conditions will be imposed restricting the nature of the activities undertaken, requiring customer visits by appointment only, and limiting the number of persons operating from the premises at any one time. Subject to conditions, the proposal is therefore considered to accord with Core Policies 61 and 64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Ecology and biodiversity

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that development protects, conserves and enhances biodiversity and avoids adverse impacts on designated sites and ecological networks.

Gastard Meadows County Wildlife Site is located approximately 253 metres to the north-west of the application site. The proposal relates solely to the change of use of an existing commercial unit and does not involve any operational development, external alterations or habitat loss. Given the nature of the proposal and its separation from the County Wildlife Site, no adverse effects on ecological interests or biodiversity are anticipated. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the requirements of Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

CONCLUSION

The proposal seeks retrospective planning permission for the change of use of part of Unit 3 from lawful B8 storage to a small-scale car valeting operation. The use forms part of an established commercial site and represents a modest diversification of an existing rural employment use. The proposal does not involve any external alterations to the building and would therefore have no adverse effect on the character or appearance of the area, or ecology.

Having regard to the scale and nature of the operation, it is not considered that the proposal would result in unacceptable impacts upon neighbouring residential amenity, highway safety and parking provision. The Council's Highways Officer has raised no objection to the proposal.

The concerns raised by local residents regarding the potential for future intensification of the use have been carefully considered. However, such concerns can be appropriately addressed through the imposition of planning conditions restricting the nature and extent of the use permitted. Subject to these controls, the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the development can operate without causing unacceptable harm to the amenities of neighbouring occupiers or the safe operation of the local highway network.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered to accord with Core Policies 1, 2, 11, 34, 50, 57, 61 and 64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, Policies BE1 and HE1 of the Corsham Neighbourhood Plan, the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework. Planning permission is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION: That Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans received 24/04/26:

Location Plan and Existing Block Plan 25/1092/300
Existing Plans and Elevations 25/1092/301

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

2. The premises shall be used only for the valeting, cleaning, detailing, paint correction, polishing and application of protective coatings to motor vehicles. No vehicle servicing, mechanical repairs, body repairs, spray painting, MOT testing, vehicle sales or other automotive workshop activities shall take place within the premises.

REASON: In the interests of residential amenity and highway safety and because the use hereby approved has been assessed on the basis of its limited scale and nature.

3. The use hereby permitted shall only take place between the following hours:
07:00 and 18:00 Mondays - Saturdays and not at any time on Sundays or public holidays.

REASON: To ensure the retention of an environment free from intrusive noise and activity in the interests of the amenity of the area

4. No more than two people shall be engaged in the operation of the business from the premises at any one time.

REASON: To ensure that the use remains of a scale compatible with that assessed under this application, in the interests of residential amenity and highway safety.

5. Customers shall attend the premises by prior appointment only.

REASON: To minimise vehicle movements and protect highway safety and residential amenity.

Informatives:

1. Any alterations to the approved plans, brought about by compliance with Building Regulations or any other reason must first be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority before commencement of work.
2. The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition (biodiversity gain condition) that development may not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan, if one is required in respect of this permission would be Wiltshire Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. For further information on exempt developments please refer to:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because one or more of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements is considered to apply.

3. The applicant is requested to note that this permission does not affect any private property rights and therefore does not authorise the carrying out of any work on land outside their control. If such works are required it will be necessary for the applicant to obtain the landowners consent before such works commence. If you intend carrying out works in the vicinity of the site boundary, you are also advised that it may be expedient to seek your own advice with regard to the requirements of the Party Wall Act 1996.