

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Janice Gooch
Senior Conservation Officer
Wiltshire Council Conservation (Central)

Officer's Name: Helena Carney
Officer's Title: Senior Planning Officer

Application No: PL/2026/04559
Development of a Diagnostic and Surgical Hub (DASH) together with means of access and new landscaping.
Salisbury District Hospital, Odstock Road, Salisbury, SP2 8BJ

Please find following comments in respect of the above application(s).

Recommendations:

☐	No comment
☐	Support in principle subject to amendments to the scheme (as set out below)
☐	Support subject to conditions (as set out below)
☐	Object (for reasons set out below)
☐	No objections

Scope of comments: the following comments relate to the built historic environment.

National Policy and guidance: From the point of view of the historic environment the main statutory tests are set out within the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 66 (PP) require that **special regard** be given to the desirability of preserving or listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 also requires the Council to pay **special attention** to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of designated Conservation Areas.

Under the Regeneration and Levelling Up Act 2023 Paragraph 58B of the Planning Act 1990 requires that in considering whether to grant planning permission or permission in principle for the development of land in England which affects a registered park and garden, the LPA must have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the asset or its setting.

The NPPF (August 2026) sets out Government planning policy for England. Chapter 20, Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, recognises heritage assets as an irreplaceable resource. Heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, with harm avoided unless there is a clear and convincing justification. Decision-makers are required to apply a balanced approach, giving substantial weight to the conservation of heritage assets and weighing any harm to significance against the public benefits of the proposal.

National Planning Practice Guidance provides guidance on interpreting the NPPF.

Historic England's Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008) provides policy and guidance for the "sustainable management of the historic environment". Additional relevant guidance on the application of policies set out in the NPPF is contained within their publications:

- Historic Environment Good Practice Planning Advice Note 2 – Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (2015)

"The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 3" (HE GPA3) which notes that "The importance [of setting] lies in what the setting contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or to the ability to appreciate that significance."

Local Policy: The Council's Core Strategy Policy CP58 'Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment' requires that "designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance." It is also required that distinctive elements of Wiltshire's historic environment, including non-designated heritage assets, which contribute to a sense of local character and identity will be conserved, and where possible enhanced.

The Council's Core Strategy CP 57: Ensuring high-quality design requires a high quality of design in all new developments. Proposals are required to "demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through (amongst other things) "enhancing local distinctiveness by responding to the value of the natural and historic environment, relating positively to its landscape setting and the existing pattern of development" and "responding 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 effectively integrate the building into its setting."

Proposal: The description of the works state 'Development of a Diagnostic and Surgical Hub (DASH) together with means of access and new landscaping.' The works also include the proposed demolition of four buildings to the west of the site to allow for a replacement car park to be formed.

Relevant planning history: Refer to Case Officers Report.

Issues: impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings, conservation areas and registered Park & Gardens.

Information considered/provided: Policy HE5 of the NPPF requires applicants to assess the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including the contribution made by their setting, and to identify the likely effects of the development on that significance. Sufficient information should be provided to enable a clear understanding of the significance of the heritage asset and its setting, and the impact of the proposal upon it.

Decision-makers must be satisfied that assessments accurately reflect the effects on heritage assets caused by development proposals and in this case the application is submitted by two Wessex Archaeology Reports, which will be discussed below, and proposed designs of the new DASH building. No details have been provided of the proposed western car park to replace the existing eastern car parking that will be lost. To create the western car park, it is proposed to demolish 4No. building, one of which has been highlighted by Wessex Archaeology as having high heritage significance, and two buildings that they considered to be of 'moderate-low' heritage significance.

Additional information on the details of the proposed western car parking would be beneficial as this would provide further information to be able to provide further guidance.

Significance of assets and contribution of setting (as appropriate): The NPPF defines significance as the "value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be **archaeological**, **architectural**, **artistic** or **historic**. Significance derives not only from a heritage

asset's physical presence, but also from its setting." Historic England assesses significance in a similar manner, referring to evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values of a place.

The interest may be architectural, or historic as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 S 1.

The Wessex Archaeology (WA) Built Heritage Assessment report (2019) provides a brief history of the site, highlighting that the U.S. Army Hospital was in operation between 1942 (officially opened 1st March 1943) - 12 May 1944, when the unit relocated to a base in France. Some of the existing military hospitals were passed over to the U.S., but Odstock, together with Taunton and Bristol were new sites specially given to the U.S. to complement the existing U.S Army hospitals within the area. The design for the new buildings was British, though adapted to suit American requirements. The WA report (2019) notes 'many of the hospitals were hastily built and defects in design and workmanship often hindered operations and required expensive repairs' (para.3.2.5), including Odstock (para.3.2.6).

The WA report (2019) advises that most of the brick buildings survive in the central and southern part of the hospital (although modified to a greater or lesser degree) whereas the north-east and north-west parts of the Site have been redeveloped. Following the war, the hospital was transferred to Wiltshire County Council and then to the NHS (1948). Some new development was undertaken, together with adaption and conversion of the existing buildings (para.3.3.4.). Later phases, in particular the 1980s, saw further development and expansion and 'the majority of the Second World War huts were removed'.

The WA report (2019) provides an assessment of the existing buildings and indicates that some of the buildings (WWII & 1960s) should be considered as non-designated heritage assets, which includes at least one of the buildings proposed for demolition.

Assessment: The application was submitted with a Wessex Archaeology report (Diagnostic and Surgical Hub – Heritage Statement – April 2026 (Doc. Ref. 218342.1)) which was based on three previous reports - undertaken by Wessex Archaeology:

- Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (Wessex Archaeology 2019a) commissioned 'to prepare a built heritage assessment of buildings and structures at Salisbury District Hospital. This study is part of the Health Education and Technology (HEAT) Project and is intended to support and inform the planning application for a Health and Wellbeing Campus'.
- Built Heritage Assessment (Wessex Archaeology 2019b)
- Setting Assessment (Wessex Archaeology 2019c)

The submitted Heritage Statement (2026) focusses on the proposed new DASH building location only (the east car park & helipad) which recognises the potential of archaeology within this area. The submitted application references future consideration of the potential of relocating the helipad, but this is outside the scope of this application. However, due to the nature of the site, any associated works to facilitate the relocation of the parking and/or helipad may require further assessment and review from a heritage consideration.

New DASH Building

The proposed re-development of the eastern carpark to allow for the development of the new DASH building has the potential to impact on the wider setting historic built environment due to the proposed height (3-4 storeys) and scale of the building, particularly in relation with the topology of the wider area.

The Wessex Archaeology report (2026) has reviewed the potential impact within a specific study area but have offered no consideration of wider or long-distance views. There is a concern that the restriction of the study area, which is typical and within guidelines (CIfA) for archaeological assessments, does not take into consideration the wider and longer views out from heritage assets or from beyond Salisbury City from the

high land. Due to the relatively flat topology, there is potential for long views and vistas out of these conservation areas, and these should be considered as these are outside of the 'study area.'

To the north of the proposed site is Salisbury Conservation Area, to the north-east is Britford Conservation Area and to the south-east, Bodenham Conservation Area. Salisbury City and Britford have conservation area appraisals. Salisbury CAA also includes important viewpoints.

Salisbury is a historic city, with a long and complex history, but has protected views (as identified within the Conservation Area Appraisals) out and into the city and includes sites such as Old Sarum. Consideration of the views out of the city should be undertaken as these contribute to the setting of the conservation area and its relationship with the surrounding land.

Bodenham forms the entrance to Longford Castle (Grade I) and its protected landscape (Grade II*), as it was developed as part of the wider estate, and therefore has an important relationship with Longford Castle. Longfield Castle gardens date from the early C19, and though informed by the C17, it retains the formal park with avenues and rides formed in 1773 and elements by 'Capability' Brown. The views and vistas looking out of the park and gardens would have responded to the wider landscape and setting, forming an important part of the design process which relate to the 'Picturesque Movement'. Therefore, the immediate and wider setting, including land outside of the control of the estate holder, form part of the original design principles, and these should be considered in the Heritage Statement.

Within the wider setting is Trafalgar Park (Grade II), designed by the respected Charles Bridgeman, the forerunner to 'Capability' Brown, and the main house, Trafalgar House (Grade I), designed by John James, John Wood the Younger and Nicholas Revett. It was constructed in the C18 with noted 'Picturesque views', as with Longford Castle, would incorporate the wide and long views associated with the 'Picturesque Movement'. As with Longford Castle, the views and vistas out of the designed landscape should be assessed within the Heritage Statement.

The submitted application information includes a Landscape Assessment which indicate that the view from the south-east would show the proposed new building in close views, and have limited impact on long views, but these views should consider the position of the highly graded designated heritage assets. Policy HE4 (NPPF 2026) requires that heritage assets be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance (in this case highly graded I & II*) and harm avoided.

The submitted application provides limited indication of proposed materials, and whilst this could be a matter for condition. However, there is a potential for the correct solution of materials to help reduce or assist in mitigation of any potential impact on the wider views and vistas of the designated heritage assets, and therefore, some guidance to material choice will help create a more informed decision.

The proposed eastern site does have the potential to have impact on buried/ below ground, and this should be assessed by the Archaeological team.

Summary & conclusion: The NPPF confirms that when considering the potential impact of a development proposal on the significance on a non-designated heritage asset, a balanced view should be undertaken as part of the planning balance.

In this case, a wider assessment of the setting of the highly graded designated heritage assets and key views identified within the Salisbury City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal should also be undertaken to allow for an informed decision to be undertaken.

