

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

10 September 2026

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(South/West)

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Application No: PL/2026/05251 and PL/2026/04027

Erection of a traditional-style school canopy with black-framed structure and rainwater guttering to provide a covered outdoor play, learning and classroom area
Sutton Veny Church of England School, High Street, Sutton Veny, Warminster, BA12 7AP

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.

Policy:

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. Sections 16 (LBC) and 66 (PP) require that **special regard** be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing 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.

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.

Chapter 5 of the NPPF sets out policies for “Meeting the challenge of climate change” and gives substantial weight to the benefits of improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings and/or drawing energy from district heat networks, renewable and low carbon sources (including through the installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights).

National Planning Practice Guidance provides guidance on interpreting the NPPF.

Wiltshire Council’s Core Strategy Policy CP57 ‘Ensuring high quality design and place shaping’: A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality.

Historic England Advice Note 2 – Making changes to Heritage Assets illustrates the application of policies set out in the NPPF in determining applications for PP and LBC.

The following points are taken from the Historic England document “The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 3” (HE GPA3) that are considered to be particularly relevant:

HE GPA3 Part 1:

“The NPPF makes it clear that the setting of a heritage asset is the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset.”

“The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. ...views of or from an asset will play an important part...”

“While setting can be mapped in the context of an individual application or proposal, it cannot be definitively and permanently described for all time as a spatially bounded area or as lying within a set distance of a heritage asset. This is because the surroundings of a heritage asset will change over time.”

“The importance lies in what the setting contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or to the ability to appreciate that significance.”

Site and assets considered:

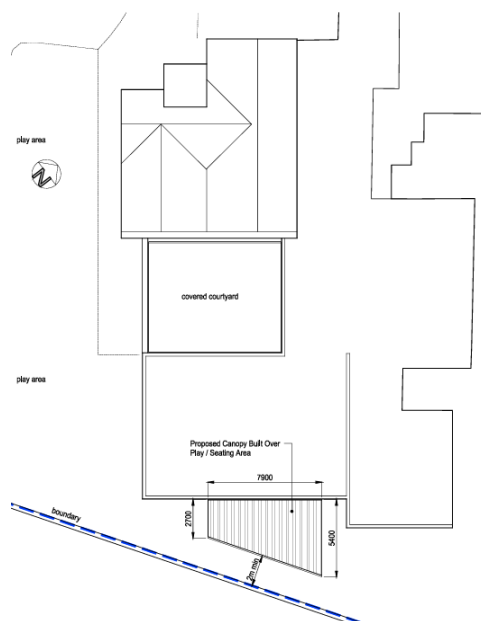
Sutton Veny School is a grade II listed building. The list description, a means to identify a building, reads as follows:

‘Primary school. 1872-3 by J.L. Pearson, additions 1890s and 1974. Dressed limestone, tiled roof, ashlar stacks. ‘L’-plan with added rear wings and clock tower. Moulded pointed doorway at base of 3- stage tower with angle buttresses. Two square-headed lancets and string course to second stage, pair of cusped lancets to offset bellstage, gilded clock face in roll-moulded pointed panel, steep gabled roof with gabled bellcote in ashlar, retains bell. Wings to left and right of entrance have 2-light geometric-style windows with hoodmoulds, gable ends have 3-light geometric-style windows, angle buttresses. Rear has 1890s added range with two 3-light geometric-style windows and double gabled roof. Roofs with coped verges and ceramic ridge cresting. Attached to left return are C20 flat-roofed extensions. Attached to rear are well designed 1974 extensions. Interior altered’.

Adjacent to the school is the grade I listed church of St John the Evangelist, a very significant church also by J L Pearson. As such, the two form a very significant group.

The school is within the Sutton Veny conservation area..

Proposal: the erection of a canopy, with sides, on the



Proposed elevations



Relevant planning history

The agent refers to a previous consent (for listed building consent)

PL/2021/06945

Erection of a fixed canopy over an enclosed courtyard

The application was approved, however, the canopy was for a different **enclosed location**.

From my report:

'The works will cause no harm to historic fabric of significance. The canopy could be removed without harm to the listed building, when it is no longer needed and as such, the proposals are readily reversible. The siting of the proposed canopy is in a discrete location such that the proposals are not considered to harm the setting of either the school, church or wider conservation area'.

PL/2025/03650 and PL/03778 were for *Proposed oak frame canopy with glazed roof and internal alterations to doorways.*

In respect of the then proposed canopy over the door I said:

'The canopy will be located in front of a door that is part of a modern link to a modern part of the school building. As such, there will be no impact on historic fabric (the necessary groove will be incised into render or recon stone). Furthermore, the canopy is discreetly located, away from the church and the road, and as such, there would be no adverse impact on the church's setting or the CA'.

Location of the previously approved door canopy:



Issues: impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings, impact on the conservation area.

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.

The application is supported by a 'Design, Access and Heritage statement' provided by 123v. The document provides limited information about the building and fails to include an objective assessment of the affected fabric, its date, significance, or the impact of the proposed works. It makes no reference to the conservation area, nor considers the setting of the adjacent grade I listed church.

Decision-makers must be satisfied that assessments accurately reflect the effects on heritage assets caused by development proposals.

Significance of assets and contribution of setting:

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.

In this case, the principal interest of the listed building (the school) is:

That it was designed by a leading Victorian architect (ie architectural interest);

That it forms part of an important group with the adjacent church, also by the same architect;

That it is a good example of Victorian Gothic;

That it was constructed as a school and continues to be a school;

The playground with low wall;

That it is constructed in quality local materials ie stone;

That it has interesting features such as the windows, bell tower etc.

Of no interest/significance are the modern extensions.

Of lesser interest is the internal arrangement/floorplan, which has been modified over the years.

Assessment:

I have reservations about the proposals in view of the location.

First, the proposed canopy would be erected against a modern wall of the school which has no historic significance. However, this part of the building does have some interesting design features such as the arched windows. The proposed canopy is shown as cutting across the top of the window arches. (The existing ‘pull-out’ canopy is set above the window arches).

Secondly, they are proposing more than just a canopy, it is a structure with sides, albeit not full height. Those sides they are proposing to form from polycarbonate profiled roof sheeting. This is not an attractive quality product.

And third, and most importantly, the structure is close to the boundary of the churchyard. It will be visible from the churchyard and also the street. The poor quality of the design and the proposed materials, will in my view, cause some slight harm to the setting of the church and the conservation area.



Summary & conclusion:

The NPPF confirms that when considering the potential impact of a development proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, substantial weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). It makes clear that any harm to a designated heritage asset will be a matter of considerable importance and weight which requires clear and convincing justification.

The proposals will not result in any harm to fabric of significance in view of the fact that the canopy would be affixed to a 20th century element of the school. However I consider there will be some slight harm to the setting of the school by virtue of the design and materiality of the proposed canopy, as well as some slight harm to the setting of the grade I church in view of the design, materiality and proximity. I also consider that the proposals would result in a negative impact on the Sutton Veny conservation area (albeit a minor adverse impact).

Policy HE6 of the NPPF allows for harm caused to be weighed against the public benefits resulting from the proposal and in this instance, the benefits are demonstrable.

However, sections 16 and 66 of the Act requires that any level harm caused should be taken seriously ie that the LPA should pay '*special regard*' to the likely impacts.

I consider that the proposals could be amended to reduce the adverse impacts (which had they engaged a heritage specialist at the outset to undertake an assessment of significance, they could have perhaps anticipated in their design).