

NICHOLAS MORLEY ARCHITECTS

FULL PLANNING APPLICATION

BLACKSMITHS COTTAGE, BOX, CORSHAM, SN13 8EB

Conversion of Existing Building into Dwelling (C3)

Prepared by Nicholas Morley B.A.(Hons) BArch Arb RIBA

HERITAGE and PLANNING STATEMENT (August 2026)

1.0 Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a revised application for the conversion of the former Blacksmiths Cottage at Pye Corner, Box, to a single residential dwelling.

The application follows the refusal of a previous scheme and has been prepared in response to the specific concerns identified by Wiltshire Council in the decision notice. Since that decision, the applicant has undertaken a comprehensive review of the proposal and commissioned additional technical work to ensure that the application is supported by robust and objective evidence.

The purpose of this statement is to demonstrate that the revised proposal responds positively to the Council's previous concerns and accords with the Development Plan when read as a whole, including Core Policy 57, and with the relevant national decision-making policies contained within the National Planning Policy Framework 2026 (the "Framework").

The refusal reasons were:

1 The proposed dwelling would provide restricted outlook and limited private amenity space. The constrained nature of the plot, combined with limited daylight and lack of adequate external space, results in substandard living conditions for future occupants. This conflicts with Core

Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Section 12 of the NPPF, which require new development to provide good-quality internal and external living environments.

2 The creation of a separate dwelling and subdivision of an existing garden results in a form of development that is incongruous with the established pattern and character of the area.

While the existing building is traditional and the lane informal, the introduction of a second independent household on the plot, with separate domestic activity and limited private amenity space, produces a contrived form of backland development.

This arrangement is not consistent with the historic pattern or intended function of the plot, and is harmful to the visual and functional character of development along this lane. The proposal therefore conflicts with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core.

Core Policy 57 states:

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 to local topography by ensuring that important views into, within and out of the site are to be retained and enhanced

the retention and enhancement of existing important landscaping and natural features, (e.g. trees, hedges, banks and watercourses), in order to take opportunities to enhance biodiversity, create wildlife and recreational corridors, effectively integrate the development into its setting and to justify and mitigate against any losses that may occur through the development

being sympathetic to and conserving historic buildings and historic landscapes

making efficient use of land whilst taking account of the characteristics of the site and the local context to deliver an appropriate development which relates effectively to the immediate setting and to the wider character of the area.

These two reasons for refusal are considered in turn within this statement. The additional evidence submitted with the revised application demonstrates that the matters identified by the Council have been carefully reconsidered and addressed through further technical assessment, historical research, character appraisal and updated site information. The proposal should therefore be assessed in the context of the current site circumstances, the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework 2026.

2.0 - Existing Site

The site consists of two-storey former blacksmiths with a single storey extension, known as Blacksmiths Cottage, located to the rear of a terrace of houses at Pye Corner. There is a small, paved access lane between the blacksmiths and the terrace houses of Pye Corner that provides access to the rear gardens of No's 1 – 3 Pye Corner and Blacksmiths Cottage. The site is accessed from the byway, that is accessed from Devizes Road. On the opposite side of the byway there are detached dwellings and the garden to No.1 Pye Corner, and the garden for the Blacksmiths Cottage.

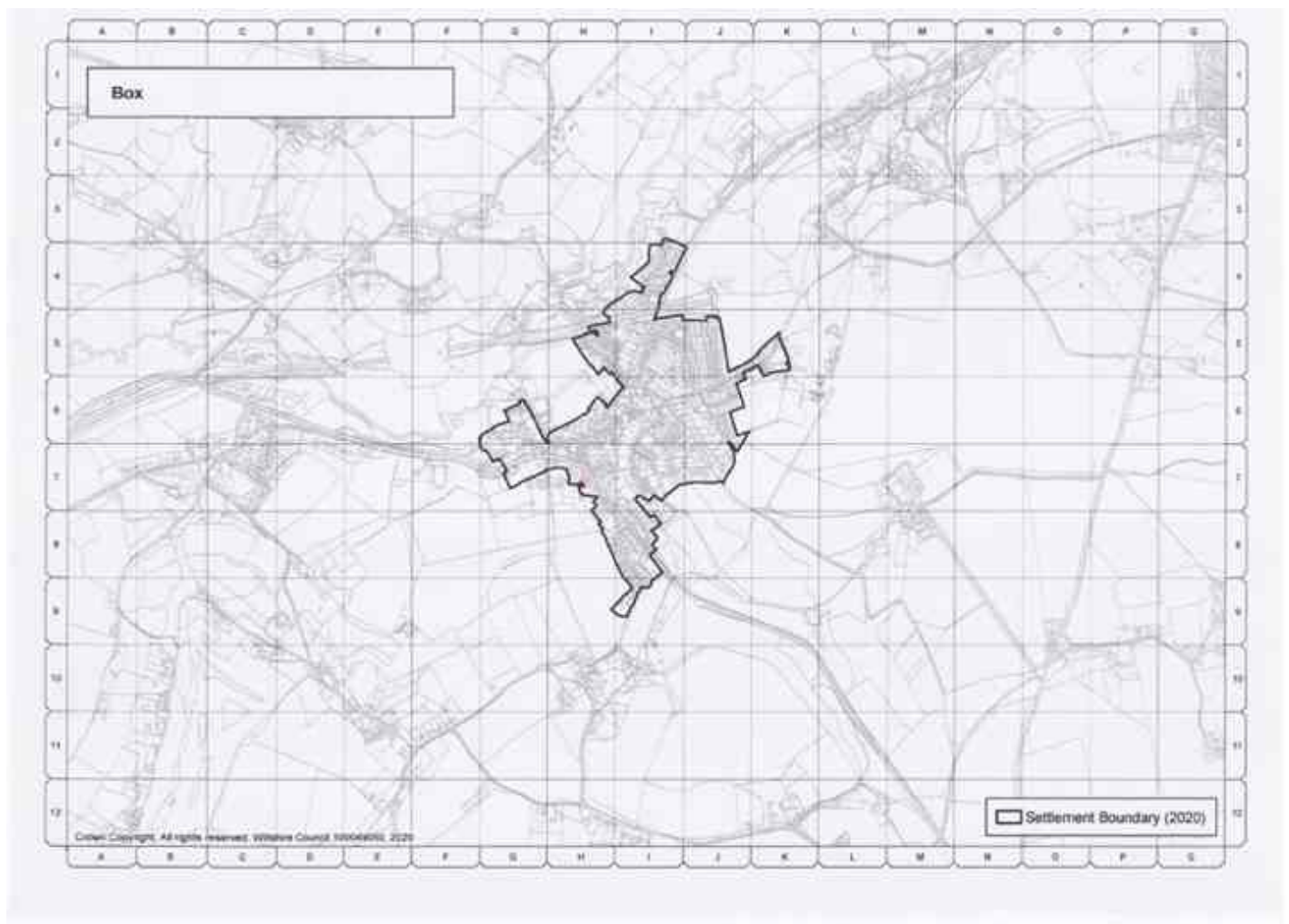
The terrace houses of Pye Corner are faced in a mixture of ashlar and rubble stone and modern faced render. The properties have pitched tile roofs and traditionally proportioned windows, some of which have been replaced with modern pvc frames. These external materials are characteristic of the area given that ashlar was quarried close by in Box.

The existing building is constructed from coursed rubble stone under a tiled pitched roof with stone parapets to the gable ends. There is a timber door to access the building with a long timber window adjacent to the door, above that is another timber window at first floor level. There are two smaller windows, one in each gable end. The interior has a solid ground floor and a part first floor currently accessed via a ladder. The roof timbers are exposed and the walls are rubble stone. The lean-to extension is faced in reconstructed bath stone blockwork under a mono-pitch roof. There is a timber door to accessed from the small lane at the rear. The windows are pvc and there is vertical timber cladding to part of the side elevation facing the byway.

It is worthy of note and the existing building sits at ground level. The only area where the building is below the ground level is on the South Elevation where the adjoining land is built up by 1m. This has no effect on the building outlook whatsoever as there are no windows to this elevation at ground floor.

The building forms part of the established settlement of Box and its historic location reflects its previous use as a smithy.

Blacksmiths Cottage is within the development boundary of Box and is also located with the Box Conservation Area. The site is also located within the Green Belt and the Cotswolds National Landscape, formerly known as the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).



The site location is indicated by a red dot

The map under indicates the location of Blacksmiths Cottage within the established village boundary. It is important to note that Pye Corner forms part of an established area of residential development extending between Devizes Road and the historic byway. The location of Blacksmiths Cottage should therefore be considered in the context of this established settlement pattern rather than being characterised in isolation as backland development.



The historic pattern of detached and separated garden areas is also relevant to the assessment of the proposal. The garden area associated with No. 1 Pye Corner extends across the byway and is physically separated from the principal dwelling. This provides an example of an established detached garden arrangement within Pye Corner and demonstrates that the relationship between buildings, the byway and associated garden land is not necessarily based upon a conventional immediately adjoining suburban garden arrangement. Historical evidence also indicates that this area of land may have been associated with the former Smithy. The relationship between the former Smithy, the byway and surrounding garden land is therefore considered to be an established feature of the locality rather than a relationship created by the current proposal.



The above map indicates the location of Blacksmiths Cottage (7) and shows that there are properties arranged around the byway which again is as a result of the history of this part of Box.

The proposal therefore falls to be considered against the national policies relating to the Green Belt, protected landscapes, the historic environment and development within established settlements.

Photographs of the site taken in July 2026 are located on the next pages.



View towards Devizes Road with Blacksmiths Cottage on the right



View of Blacksmiths Cottage from garden



View of Blacksmiths Cottage from byway



Garden To Blacksmiths Cottage. (Note the garden to 1 Pye Corner is also a “divorced garden”)

3.0 Historic Context

An understanding of the historical development of Blacksmiths Cottage is fundamental to assessing both its contribution to the character of Pye Corner and the appropriateness of its continued use.

The previous planning application considered the proposal principally in terms of its physical relationship with the surrounding settlement. Whilst that assessment is an important aspect of the planning balance, it is equally important to understand how the building has evolved alongside the village over time which has now been considered further.

The evidence now assembled demonstrates that the former Smithy is not an isolated or incidental building. Rather, it has formed part of the historic fabric of Pye Corner for well over one hundred and seventy years and represents an enduring component of the village's historic working landscape.

Pye Corner occupies an historically significant position on the western approach to the village of Box. Unlike later planned residential development, the settlement evolved gradually in response to local industry, agriculture and the historic highway network. Buildings were added incrementally over many generations, creating an informal pattern of cottages, workshops, ancillary structures and detached gardens that remains evident today.

The character of Pye Corner is therefore defined less by regularity or formal layout than by the cumulative evolution of individual buildings responding to changing economic and social needs. This organic pattern is one of the defining characteristics of the locality and forms an important part of its significance within the wider Conservation Area.

Historical mapping confirms that the building was already established during the nineteenth century and was identified as the "Smithy" on historic Ordnance Survey mapping. See map on next page date 1884. You can observe that whole of Pye Corner was in existence at time and that the Lamb Inn was also present. You can also clearly see the established byway that forms a loop around Pye Corner as it still does today.



The identification of the building as the village Smithy is significant. Blacksmiths occupied an essential role within rural communities throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, providing services not only for agriculture but also for transport, quarrying and the maintenance of tools and equipment. The location of the building is entirely consistent with this historic function.

Situated adjacent to the historic byway and close to routes serving both the village and the nearby quarry, the Smithy occupied a practical position from which it could serve local residents and passing traffic alike. Its location therefore reflects function rather than coincidence.

Research undertaken as part of this application has identified a number of historical sources relating to the occupation of the Smithy and the families associated with Pye Corner.

Local historical records indicate that the building served successive generations of village blacksmiths and remained closely associated with the economic life of Box throughout the nineteenth century.

Research published by Box People & Places records the activities of members of the Worthy Phelps family and the Cannings family, whose connections with the Smithy help illustrate the long-standing importance of the building within the local community.

Whilst these historical accounts are not, in themselves, determinative of the planning balance, they provide valuable context regarding the origins and continued significance of the building within the historic settlement.

One of the most striking aspects of the available historical evidence is the remarkable continuity of the building's presence within Pye Corner.

Comparison of nineteenth-century mapping, twentieth-century aerial photography and current mapping demonstrates that the Smithy has retained its established relationship with the surrounding settlement throughout successive periods of change. These changes over the last hundred years have further linked the building to the village which has developed around it.

Whilst neighbouring land uses have inevitably evolved, the former Smithy has remained a recognisable component of the village as has the terrace of houses at Pye Corner.

The proposal therefore represents the continued occupation and maintenance of a long-established building rather than the introduction of a new form of development into previously undeveloped land. The proposal involves the conversion and adaptation of an existing permanent building within an established settlement. It is therefore materially different in planning terms from the construction of a new building on an undeveloped site.

This distinction is an important consideration when assessing the proposal against policies concerned with settlement character.

Although its original use has ceased, the former Smithy continues to make a positive contribution to the character of Pye Corner. Its modest scale, traditional construction and relationship with the historic byway remain legible within the streetscape.

Like many former agricultural and industrial buildings throughout Wiltshire, its continued preservation is now dependent upon identifying a viable long-term use.

Residential conversion offers an opportunity to secure the building's future whilst preserving the external characteristics that contribute to the historic identity of the area. This approach is consistent with the Framework's policy approach to securing the conservation of heritage assets through viable uses consistent with their conservation. In particular, Policy HE4 requires development proposals affecting heritage assets to maintain or secure a use consistent with their conservation and to avoid, or where this is not possible minimise, harm to their significance.

Without such a use, there is a risk that the building will continue to deteriorate, ultimately resulting in the gradual erosion of a locally significant element of the village's historic environment.

The historical evidence assembled for this application demonstrates that Blacksmiths Cottage has formed part of the established settlement of Pye Corner since at least the mid-nineteenth century and, in all likelihood, predates the earliest mapping currently available.

Its historic role as the village Smithy explains both its location and its relationship with the surrounding highway network. The proposal should therefore be viewed as the conversion and continued use of an established historic building within the settlement, rather than the construction of a new building on previously undeveloped land.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2026 places significant emphasis on the effective use of existing land and buildings and on securing appropriate uses for heritage assets which are consistent with their conservation. Policy L2 gives substantial weight to benefits arising from making better use of vacant and under-utilised land and buildings, including bringing suitable existing buildings back into residential use. Policy HE4 similarly requires heritage assets to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance and supports uses consistent with their conservation.

The housing land supply position is considered separately in Section 9.0 of this statement. The provision of an additional dwelling through the conversion of an existing building is nevertheless a material planning benefit which should be considered alongside the site's

location within the established settlement and the effective reuse of an existing permanent building.

In this instance, the proposal provides an opportunity to secure the long-term future of a building that has contributed to the character and identity of Pye Corner for many generations.

Accordingly, the historical development of the site weighs positively in favour of the proposal and provides important context for the assessment of both settlement character and the overall planning balance.

4.0 Character Appraisal of Locality

Box as a village developed in a broadly linear fashion along the A4 (High Street) and Devizes Road. Between these two roads is located the Market Place that has very dense housing to each side of a narrow road. Devizes Road is reached from the High Street via a series of sloping narrow roads which also have properties to both sides. The church is also accessed via a narrow road from the High Street. There is a quite a variety of architectural styles with a significant number facing directly onto the public highway with limited gardens and close proximity to other dwellings. Interspersed, with the old properties are some modern interventions. This is not an untypical way that a village would have developed overtime ie: spreading out from an older core. The arrival of the great western railway served by Box Hill Station (until 1965) encouraged further development with the Box Hill tunnel being built between 1838-1841 being a key part of the mainline from Bristol to London.

The varied juxtaposition of properties found at Pye Corner is repeated throughout the village. Building orientation, plot arrangements, access routes, garden relationships and the proximity of buildings to lanes and public routes vary considerably within Box. Blacksmiths Cottage forms part of this wider established pattern of development and should not be characterised in isolation as a backland site

These photographs provide examples of the established character of Box, including relatively close relationships between buildings, streets, windows, access routes and external spaces. Such relationships are characteristic of the historic settlement and should be taken into account when assessing the proposed accommodation.



Corner of Burtons Lane across from Pye Corner



Burtons Lane (observe narrowness and window juxtaposition)



Pye Corner from Chapel Lane (note similarity to Burton's Lane in width and also note openness of bye way with Blacksmiths Cottage at rear which forms part of the established character of Box)



Chapel Lane (note house directly on footpath)



Chapel Lane (modern dwellings)



Chapel Lane (house abutting footpath which also overlooks neighbour)



View along Chapel Lane to Devizes Road



House accessed directly off High Street (A4)



Divorced Gardens of Fairview Terrace



Lane that separates gardens from Fairview Terrace



View of High Street with Fairview Terrace on right



Market Place (note window onto road)



Market Place



Market Place (note outlook)



Market Place (note outlook)



Market Place (note outlook and narrow lane)



Church Lane



High Street (A4)



High Street (A4)



Lane between High Street and Devizes Road (Note Building Conversion on left)



Lane between High Street (A4) and Devizes Road (A363)



High Street (A4)



Lane between High Street (A4) and Devizes Road (A363)



Lane between High Street (A4) and Devizes Road (A363)



Example of Outlook



Houses in distance on Junction of High Street (A4) and Devizes Road (A363)



Former Lamb Inn Public House converted to dwelling at Pye Corner



Former Lamb Inn Public House converted to dwelling at Pye Corner (note converted outbuilding beyond (residential)).



Former Lamb Inn Public House converted to dwelling at Pye Corner (note converted outbuilding beyond (residential)) to left.

These photographs are only a small example of the character of Box where development is dense and overlooking is accepted. The development has happened over time and has resulted in the cohesion of the village of which both Pye Corner and Blacksmiths Cottage are an integral part.

One of the most striking conclusions arising from the site survey is that Pye Corner derives its character from diversity rather than consistency. This is relevant to the assessment of the second reason for refusal because the proposed conversion does not introduce a building form, access arrangement or garden relationship which is wholly unfamiliar within the locality. Rather, it adapts an existing building within an already varied and established pattern of development. No two plots are identical, building orientation varies, boundary treatments differ, access arrangements are informal, detached gardens are commonplace, former working buildings exist alongside traditional cottages.

Individually, these characteristics might appear unusual, but collectively, they define the distinctive identity of the settlement. This diversity is not evidence of poor planning, rather, it is the natural consequence of centuries of gradual development responding to changing social and economic circumstances.

This approach is consistent with Policy DP3 of the Framework, which requires development proposals to respond to the history, character and features of their site and setting, including through the arrangement of plots and buildings, materials and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets.

An important conclusion arising from both the historical research and the site appraisal is that adaptation is itself a defining characteristic of Pye Corner.

Historic settlements endure because buildings evolve, agricultural buildings become homes, workshops become studios, chapels become community buildings, former schools become dwellings.

National and local planning policy encourage the effective reuse of existing buildings where their character can be preserved. The proposal exemplifies this principle by retaining an established historic building whilst allowing it to adapt to contemporary needs.

When considered within its proper historical and physical context, the proposal preserves the essential characteristics of Pye Corner and supports the continued conservation of one of its long-established buildings.

5.0 - Proposed Development

It is proposed to carry out alterations both internally and externally to the property. The ground floor will consist of the living room and entrance accessed off the byway and a new staircase to the new first floor. The extension will become a kitchen, with new window that will overlook the by-way and a new WC accessed from the living room with a bin store behind.

At first floor will be two bedrooms and a bathroom. The second bedroom will require a new window which will overlook the byway. Conservation Velux rooflights will be installed in both the extension and main roof. All existing external doors and windows will be replaced with new timber doors and windows. The windows for the living room and first bedroom will also be enlarged within existing openings. A bat box is proposed on the South Gable end.

The independent daylight and sunlight assessment submitted with the application confirms that the proposed habitable rooms achieve the relevant levels of daylight assessed by the consultant and are capable of providing an acceptable standard of residential accommodation.

The garden to the property will be across the byway, adjacent to the neighbouring gardens of 1 Pye Corner and Southfields. The proposed garden is therefore separate from the building but remains within the established pattern of garden land associated with development around the byway. Its size, usability, accessibility, privacy and relationship with the dwelling should be considered in the context of the established character of Pye Corner and the wider village.

The garden extends to 74m² which provides more than adequate areas for seating and recreation in a quiet location which is also close to nature.

Materials

The main property will be retained as existing aside from two new windows and the replacement of all other doors and windows with new timber. The external materials will be repaired if needed and conservation Velux rooflights will be installed in the roof. The extension will be clad in horizontal timber cladding incorporating the new timber window overlooking the byway. The remaining windows and door will be replaced (and in some cases widened). Two conservation Velux rooflights will be installed in the mono-pitch roof.

6.0 – Transport and Access

The site is located off the A365 Devizes Road and is accessed via an established lane from Devizes Road. It is not intended to provide parking for the proposal. Only pedestrian access will be provided via the byway (BOX97) as currently exists. The byway also provides access to 1-4 Pye Corner, Southfields and Charlotte's Cottage.

No dedicated parking space is proposed. The site is located within the established settlement of Box and benefits from proximity to public transport and local services. The proposal retains the existing pedestrian access via the byway and provides cycle storage within the garden.

The Highway Department has previously indicated that the absence of dedicated parking associated with the proposal is acceptable.

The site is located within the established settlement of Box and has access to local services and public transport. Bus stops are located approximately 50 metres away on Devizes Road and approximately 350 metres away on the High Street. The site is also connected to the wider settlement by the existing pedestrian network and the byway.

The proposal is consistent with the Framework's approach to locating development in sustainable locations. Policy TR3 seeks to locate development so that it supports sustainable patterns of movement, enables good accessibility for different users and makes effective use

of existing and proposed transport infrastructure. The scale of the proposal is such that it would not generate a significant amount of movement, while the established location provides opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport

Bus – There is a pair of bus stops located on Devizes Road within about 50m of the site. The predominant route is the D3 which provides a service to Melksham and Bath.

There is a pair of bus stops located on the High Street within about 350m of the site. The predominant route is the X31 which provides a service to Chippenham and Bath.

There is good opportunity for walking and cycling to the shops and local school in Box

The pedestrian access to the property will remain unchanged and it is proposed to provide a cycle shed within the garden.

Bin collection will be as the existing properties on Devizes Road which requires the residents to wheel their bins to a collection point at the bottom of the lane.

7.0 Work Undertaken in response to refusal

The following activities were undertaken:

Commissioning an independent daylight and sunlight assessment.

Undertaking further historical research into the development of the former Smithy and Pye Corner.

Examining historic mapping and aerial photography illustrating the long-established presence of the building within the settlement.

Carrying out a detailed appraisal of the character of Pye Corner and the wider village;

Considering comparable properties within Box, including examples of detached gardens, ancillary buildings and informal historic plot arrangements.

Updating site photography following the clearance of vegetation that previously affected the outlook from the building.

The revised submission is supported by the following additional evidence:

Daylight & Sunlight Assessment	Independent assessment of internal living conditions
Historic Context & Character Appraisal	Assessment of settlement evolution and village character
Updated Site Photography	Demonstrates current outlook following vegetation clearance
Comparative Village Survey	Illustrates established character and pattern of development
Historic Mapping	Demonstrates the long-established presence of the Smithy
Historic Aerial Photography	Confirms continuity of the building within the settlement

Each document has been prepared with the specific intention of assisting the Council in reconsidering the proposal.

In addition the garden proposed for the property has an area of 74m² which makes a useable and functional outdoor space for the occupiers.

8.0 Reasons for Refusal

The reasons for refusal have been carefully reconsidered and addressed through the additional evidence and amendments submitted with the revised application. The evidence demonstrates that the matters identified in the previous decision should no longer give rise to a reason for refusal.

The reasons were:

1 The proposed dwelling would provide restricted outlook and limited private amenity space. The constrained nature of the plot, combined with limited daylight and lack of adequate external space, results in substandard living conditions for future occupants. This conflicts with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Section 12 of the NPPF, which require new development to provide good-quality internal and external living environments.

2 The creation of a separate dwelling and subdivision of an existing garden results in a form of development that is incongruous with the established pattern and character of the area. While the existing building is traditional and the lane informal, the introduction of a second independent household on the plot, with separate domestic activity and limited private amenity space, produces a contrived form of backland development. This arrangement is not consistent with the historic pattern or intended function of the plot, and is harmful to the visual and functional character of development along this lane. The proposal therefore conflicts with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core.

In respect of reason for refusal 1:

The previous decision concluded that the proposed dwelling would provide an unacceptable living environment due to concerns regarding daylight, outlook and the quality of the external amenity space.

Following the previous refusal, an independent specialist consultant was commissioned to undertake a detailed daylight and sunlight assessment of the proposed dwelling. The assessment has been prepared using recognised industry methodology and provides an objective evaluation of the quality of the proposed accommodation.

The findings demonstrate that the principal habitable rooms achieve appropriate levels of natural daylight and sunlight and are capable of providing satisfactory living accommodation.

Rather than relying upon subjective judgement, the application is therefore supported by independent technical evidence prepared by a suitably qualified specialist.

The report accompanies this application. The daylight assessment should be read alongside the submitted floor plans, elevations and updated site photography. Taken together, these documents provide an objective basis upon which to assess the quality of the proposed internal accommodation.

Substantial vegetation management has been undertaken within the site. The removal of unmanaged vegetation has materially altered the outlook from the building and represents a change in the physical circumstances which informed the previous decision. The current application should therefore be assessed against the conditions existing at the time of determination, as evidenced by the July 2026 photographs submitted with the application.

The updated photographs submitted with this application accurately record the current relationship between the dwelling and its surroundings.

The current application should therefore be assessed using contemporary site conditions.

These photographs provide a more representative basis upon which to consider outlook than historic photographs taken prior to the completion of the clearance works. The council can also revisit the site at any time to assess this if required.

The external amenity space should also be considered within the context of the established character of Pye Corner, where detached and varied garden arrangements are a recurring characteristic of the settlement.

The previous refusal also identified the amount and quality of external amenity space as a concern. The proposed garden should be assessed having regard to its actual size, usability,

accessibility and relationship with the dwelling, together with the established character of the locality.

Pye Corner contains a variety of garden arrangements, including detached and separated garden areas associated with properties and buildings located elsewhere within the established settlement. The separation between the building and its garden is therefore not, in itself, an unfamiliar characteristic of the locality.

The proposed external space provides an identifiable private area for the future occupants and should be considered in the context of the historic form and density of the settlement rather than against an assumed suburban pattern of development.

The proposed garden extends to approximately 74m² and provides space for seating, drying of clothes and other typical outdoor uses.

The garden is directly associated with the proposed dwelling and is accessible to its occupants via the established byway. Its location adjacent to other established garden areas reinforces the existing pattern of detached and separated garden land within Pye Corner.

Taken together with the independent daylight assessment and the updated site conditions, the evidence demonstrates that the proposal is capable of providing an acceptable standard of residential amenity.

Consequently, the quality of the proposed external space should not be judged solely against suburban expectations but against the established characteristics of the locality. This is key when considered against the village as a whole as opposed to the site in isolation.

The revised application is supported by independent technical evidence. When considered alongside the updated site conditions, it is concluded that the proposal is capable of providing a satisfactory standard of residential accommodation. Accordingly, the previous concerns regarding living conditions have now been comprehensively addressed.

In respect of reason for refusal 2:

The second refusal reason concluded that the proposal would fail to respect the established character and pattern of development within Pye Corner. In response, the applicant has undertaken a detailed appraisal of the settlement together with further historical research into the evolution of the former Smithy.

The historical evidence demonstrates that the building has formed part of the village since at least the nineteenth century and almost certainly predates the earliest available mapping. The proposal therefore concerns the continued evolution of an established historic building rather than the introduction of a new element into the settlement.

This distinction is important when considering the proposal against policies relating to local character.

The Character Appraisal identifies several defining characteristics of Pye Corner:

Incremental and organic settlement growth.

Detached gardens.

Historic byways.

Small-scale workshops.

Informal plot arrangements.

Diversity of building orientation.

Collectively these characteristics illustrate that the settlement has evolved gradually over many generations. The proposed conversion reflects this established pattern of adaptation.

The applicant's agent has undertaken a photographic survey of comparable properties within the immediate locality. These examples demonstrate that the characteristics previously identified as unusual are, in fact, recurring features of Pye Corner. The proposal should therefore be assessed within its proper local context.

Perhaps the most significant conclusion arising from the additional work undertaken is that it provides a clearer understanding of the existing building and its relationship with Pye Corner. The historical research explains why the building occupies its present position, while the character appraisal demonstrates how the surrounding settlement has evolved around it.

The historical research explains why the building occupies its present position. The character appraisal explains why the surrounding settlement appears as it does.

The daylight assessment objectively demonstrates the quality of the proposed accommodation.

The updated site photographs accurately record the current relationship between the building and its surroundings.

8.0 The National Planning Policy Framework (2026) ('the Framework') and Planning Policy Guidance ('PPG')

The National Planning Policy Framework 2026 ("the Framework") was published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 17 August 2026 and replaces the December 2024 Framework. The Framework contains national decision-making policies which are material considerations in the determination of planning applications.

The Framework confirms that planning applications are to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The national decision-making policies are to be read alongside the policies of the development plan.

Policy S3 of the Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For proposals within settlements, Policy S3 directs decision-makers to apply Policy S4. Policy S4 states that development proposals within settlements should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by adverse effects when assessed against the national decision-making policies.

Blacksmiths Cottage is located within the established settlement of Box and within the defined development boundary. The proposal would therefore fall within the scope of Policy S4.

The proposal provides one additional dwelling through the conversion of an existing permanent building. It does not require the construction of a new principal building on an undeveloped site and makes use of existing infrastructure and an established pedestrian access.

The proposal should therefore be considered against the Framework's positive approach to development within settlements, together with the specific policies relating to effective use of land, design, Green Belt, transport, residential amenity and the historic environment.

Policy L2 of the Framework states that substantial weight should be given to the benefits where development would make better use of vacant and under-utilised land and buildings, including bringing suitable buildings back into residential use. The policy also supports sensitive redevelopment or additional development within existing plots where specified criteria relating to character, access and living conditions are met.

The proposal directly engages with this policy objective. Blacksmiths Cottage is an existing permanent building which is currently under-utilised and is capable of being brought into residential use through conversion.

The principal building footprint is retained. The proposal therefore makes more effective use of an existing building without requiring a new-build dwelling on a separate undeveloped site. The submitted daylight and sunlight assessment addresses the living conditions of future occupants, while the character appraisal and historical research demonstrate the relationship of the building with the established settlement.

The proposal therefore represents an appropriate form of development which makes effective use of an existing building within the settlement.

The site is located within the Green Belt and the proposal must therefore be assessed against Policies GB6 and GB7 of the Framework.

Policy GB6 states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it falls within one of the categories identified in Policy GB7. Policy GB7 identifies the re-use, extension, alteration or replacement of an existing building as development which is not inappropriate where the specified criteria are satisfied. In particular, the existing building must be of permanent and substantial construction and any extension or alteration must not result in a disproportionate increase in size compared with the original building.

The existing Blacksmiths Cottage is a traditional permanent building constructed in rubble stone beneath a tiled pitched roof. The proposal retains the existing principal building and its footprint, with only limited external alterations required to facilitate the conversion.

The proposal therefore falls to be considered under the Framework's specific policy for the re-use of an existing building rather than being treated as the construction of a new building within the Green Belt.

The proposal would not result in the creation of a materially larger building. The principal form, scale and footprint of the existing building are retained.

The Green Belt issue should therefore be assessed principally through Policy GB7 and the specific circumstances of the existing building and proposed conversion.

Policy DP3 of the Framework requires development proposals to respond to their context, including the history, character and features of the site and its setting. This includes consideration of the arrangement of plots and buildings, materials, architectural features and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets.

The proposal responds directly to these principles. The principal stone building is retained, the existing roof form is maintained and the external alterations are limited. New and replacement openings are designed as timber windows and doors, while conservation rooflights are proposed.

The submitted character appraisal demonstrates that Pye Corner and the wider village of Box contain a varied relationship between buildings, lanes, gardens and access routes. The

proposal therefore responds to an existing local pattern rather than introducing a wholly new form of development.

The independent daylight assessment demonstrates that the proposed accommodation can provide acceptable internal living conditions. The updated photographs demonstrate the current outlook from the building following vegetation clearance.

The proposal therefore seeks to combine the continued conservation of the historic building with a viable residential use while maintaining the established character of the locality.

The site lies within the Box Conservation Area and the former Smithy makes a contribution to the historic character of Pye Corner. The significance of the building derives from its historic association with the former smithy use, its traditional construction and its relationship with the historic byway and surrounding settlement.

Policy HE4 of the Framework requires heritage assets to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance and supports uses which are consistent with their conservation. Development proposals should avoid, or where this is not possible minimise, harm to the significance of heritage assets.

Policy HE5 requires proposals affecting heritage assets to be supported by an assessment of significance and the potential effect of the proposal upon that significance. The historical research and character appraisal submitted with this application provide that assessment in proportion to the nature and significance of the building.

The proposed conversion retains the principal form, scale and traditional construction of the former Smithy. The external alterations are limited and have been designed to respect the character of the building.

The proposal would therefore secure a viable long-term use for the building while retaining the features which contribute to its significance.

In heritage terms, the proposal represents adaptation and continued use rather than loss of the building or a fundamental alteration to its historic character.

The site is located within the established settlement of Box and is served by an existing pedestrian route and nearby public transport. The proposal retains the established pedestrian access and provides cycle storage.

Policy TR3 of the Framework seeks to locate development so that it supports sustainable patterns of movement, enables good accessibility for different users and makes effective use of existing transport infrastructure.

Given the scale of the proposal, the development would not generate a significant amount of movement. The site's proximity to bus services and local facilities provides opportunities for journeys to be undertaken by sustainable modes.

Policy HO7 of the Framework states that substantial weight should be given to the benefits of providing homes which contribute towards meeting the evidenced accommodation needs of the community.

The proposal would provide one additional dwelling within the established settlement of Box through the conversion of an existing building.

Although the numerical contribution is necessarily modest, the proposal nevertheless provides an additional home without requiring the construction of a new principal building on an undeveloped site.

This housing benefit should be given appropriate weight alongside the benefits arising from the effective reuse of an existing building and the continued conservation of the former Smithy.

Taken as a whole, the proposal is supported by a number of relevant policies within the National Planning Policy Framework 2026.

The principal benefits are:

- the effective reuse of an existing permanent building;
- the provision of an additional dwelling within an established settlement;
- a contribution towards meeting identified housing needs;

- the continued viable use and maintenance of a historic building within the Box Conservation Area;
- the avoidance of a new-build dwelling on a separate undeveloped site;
- retention of the principal form and footprint of the existing building;
- limited external alteration designed to respect local character;
- retention of established pedestrian access;
- proximity to public transport and local services; and
- the provision of additional technical evidence addressing the matters identified in the previous refusal.

These benefits should be weighed against any identified adverse effects in accordance with the Framework and the Development Plan read as a whole.

9.0 Five Year Housing Supply

The Council's housing land supply position is a material consideration in the determination of this application.

The latest available housing land supply evidence should be relied upon at the date of determination. The previous Housing Land Supply Statement dated 18 June 2025 identified a supply of 2.8 years and this was reconfirmed on 28th June 2026 (see article in Gazette and Herald).

The National Planning Policy Framework 2026 establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development through Policy S3. For proposals within settlements, Policy S4 provides that development should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by adverse effects when assessed against the national decision-making policies.

The proposal would provide one additional dwelling within the established settlement of Box through the conversion of an existing building. Although the numerical contribution is modest, it nevertheless represents an identifiable contribution towards meeting housing needs and makes effective use of an existing building.

Policy HO7 of the Framework requires substantial weight to be given to the benefits of providing homes which contribute towards meeting evidenced accommodation needs. The housing benefit should therefore be given appropriate weight in the overall planning balance.

10.0 The Proposal in Response to Planning Policies

The proposal is to convert an existing building within the development boundary of Box.

Box is defined as a large village within Core Policy 11 - Spatial Strategy for the Corsham Community Area.

The proposal reuses an existing permanent building with limited external alterations. The works have been designed to minimise their effect upon the character and appearance of the Box Conservation Area, the Green Belt and the Cotswolds National Landscape. The principal building form and footprint are retained.

The building forms part of the established built fabric of Box and occupies an existing developed position within Pye Corner. The proposal therefore represents the conversion and adaptation of an existing building rather than the creation of a new dwelling on an undeveloped site.

The independent daylight and sunlight assessment demonstrates that the proposed habitable rooms are capable of achieving an acceptable standard of daylight and sunlight. The updated site photography also demonstrates the current outlook following the removal of unmanaged vegetation.

The proposed garden provides a defined area of private external amenity space for the future occupants. Its size, accessibility, usability and relationship with the dwelling have been considered in the context of the established garden arrangements within Pye Corner and the wider character of Box.

11.0 Conclusion

The former Smithy occupies an important place within the historic development of Pye Corner. Its significance lies not simply in its age, but in the role it has played within the gradual evolution of the village over many generations. The proposal recognises that significance.

It does not seek to erase the building's history or alter its relationship with the surrounding settlement. Instead, it seeks to ensure that a building whose original function has long since disappeared can continue to make a positive contribution to the village through an appropriate new use.

The proposal delivers a number of identifiable planning benefits, including:

- the effective reuse of an existing permanent building;
- the provision of an additional dwelling within the established settlement of Box;
- a contribution towards meeting housing needs;
- the continued viable use, maintenance and conservation of a historic building within the Box Conservation Area;
- the avoidance of a new-build dwelling on a separate undeveloped site;
- the retention of the principal form and footprint of the former Smithy;
- limited external alterations designed to respect local character;
- retention of the established pedestrian access; and
- proximity to public transport and local services.

For these reasons, it is respectfully concluded that the proposal accords with the Development Plan when read as a whole and is consistent with the relevant policies and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework 2026.

In particular, the proposal makes effective use of an existing permanent building, provides an additional dwelling within an established settlement, supports the continued conservation of a historic building and is supported by additional technical evidence addressing the matters identified in the previous refusal.

The proposal is also capable of being accommodated within the existing built form without a disproportionate increase in the size of the building and with limited external alterations. The independent daylight assessment and updated site photography address the previous concerns regarding internal living conditions and outlook, while the historical research and character appraisal provide further evidence of the established relationship between the former Smithy, the byway and the surrounding settlement.

Where the Council's housing land supply position engages the relevant provisions of the Framework, the housing benefits of the proposal should be given appropriate weight in the planning balance.

The previous reasons for refusal have been directly addressed by the revised submission and, having regard to the Development Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework 2026 and the evidence submitted with the application, there is no substantive planning reason why the conversion should now be refused.

Planning permission is therefore respectfully sought.