

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/01787
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Cricket Ground, Land North West Of St Barnabas Church, Nr Melksham, SN12 7PT
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Erection of wooden changing pavilion/facility.
RECOMMENDATION:	That Planning Permission be GRANTED

PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks planning permission for the erection of a wooden changing pavilion/facility, which is to be constructed of horizontal timber with a veranda style porch to the front of the property. The proposed pavilion is located within the general cricket ground area, on an area of regularly maintained short-mown grassland which borders perimeter of the cricket pitch and it is shown set to the immediate north of the pitch area.

The proposal has been amended following Sport England comments and has a revised internal layout. The footprint has remained unchanged.

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The site is within open countryside in the middle of Beanacre and next to the grade II listed St Barnabus Church. There are no additional constraints in terms of Conservation Area or National Landscape.

RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Wiltshire Core Strategy:

- Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
- Core Policy 58: Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment

Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan2

- Policy 1: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy 13: Biodiversity
- Policy 18: Landscape Character
- Policy 20: Locally Distinctive, High Quality Design
- Policy 21: Local Heritage

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The Planning Practice Guidance

National Design Guide

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Full comments available on the webpage for the application.

Melksham without Parish Council: No objection (*No objection received in subsequent re-consultations*).

WC Conservation: No objection

WC Archaeology: No objection

WC Drainage: No objection

Sport England: Initially raised an objection highlighting concerns over the suitability of the proposal. Proposal was subsequently amended and no objection was raised as a result.

REPRESENTATIONS

15 comments in support from local residents. The comments are summarised below and available in full on the application's web page:

- Improved changing and toilet facilities for players.
- Better provision for junior, youth and female cricket.
- Reduced reliance on St Barnabas Church facilities.
- Benefits to community cohesion and local recreation.
- Pavilion regarded as modest, unobtrusive and appropriate in appearance.
- Support for long-term sustainability of cricket at the sit

An additional comment has been submitted which raises concern over the potential foul drainage for the toilets proposed and the potential conflict with the existing ground water.

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 adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and, where applicable, any made Neighbourhood Plans.

Principle of Development

In this instance, it is necessary to consider whether the proposed development is acceptable in principle due to its location in Beanacre a small village without a settlement boundary, as

such development is considered to be in the open countryside which would typically be resisted.

However, in this instance the proposed pavilion is ancillary to the established sporting use of the site, in this case Cricket. The proposal will enhance and secure the continued use of the location as a sporting pitch for the future and is considered to be an overall benefit.

As such, the principle of development is considered acceptable, subject to the detailed assessment of design, amenity, and other material considerations set out below.

Design and Impact upon the character and context of the area

Core Policy 57 - Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping (WCS) seeks to ensure that all new development is of high design quality, reflecting local context, character, and distinctiveness. Policy 20 of the JMNP2 similarly requires a high standard of design.

In terms of scale the proposal in this instance is large. While large it is situated on a large sports pitch and in terms of the wider scale and site it is not considered that the proposal would result in a sense of the wider site or setting being overdeveloped. The amended design of the proposal in this instance is a typical example of an ancillary sporting building. The appearance and style is sympathetic to the character and appearance of the wider setting.

Having regard to the above, the proposal complies with the design principles set out in Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Appendix D of the Wiltshire Design Guide and the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan.

Amenity

Point vii of Core Policy 57 - Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that developments do not adversely affect neighbouring properties.

Policy P3 of the NPPF requires development to contribute positively to the creation of healthy, safe and inclusive places. In particular, Policy P3(b) seeks to ensure that development provides a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and safeguards the reasonable living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. In assessing amenity impacts, regard should be had to matters including privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, overbearing impacts, noise and disturbance, and the overall quality of the living environment created by the development.

The proposed development has been assessed in terms of its potential impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties, with particular regard to loss of light, overshadowing, loss of privacy, and overbearing effects. Due to the proposal's location it is considered that the cricket pavilion would not result in unacceptable amenity impacts in terms of overlooking, loss of light, loss of privacy or overshadowing on the neighbouring residential properties to the north of the site.

The proposal therefore accords with Core Policy 57 point vii in respect of safeguarding residential amenity and Appendix D of the Wiltshire Design Guide.

Heritage Impact

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 requires that special regard be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Section 72(1) of the Act requires the Council to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of designated Conservation Areas.

The Council's Core Strategy Policy CP58 'Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment' requires that designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance and encourages proposals which improve the condition of heritage assets at risk. Policy 21 (JMNP2) reflects the objective of protecting and enhancing heritage assets.

The Council's Core Strategy CP 57: Ensuring high quality design requires a high quality of design in all new developments. The policy requires applicants to "demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through (amongst other things) responding to the value of the natural and historic environment and being sympathetic to and conserving historic buildings and landscapes. Development is required to respond positively to the existing 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.

The NPPF heritage policies (HE4-HE10) recognise heritage assets as an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Development proposals affecting heritage assets should be accompanied by sufficient information to understand the significance of the asset, including the contribution made by its setting, and the potential effect of the proposal on that significance.

When determining applications affecting designated heritage assets, substantial weight should be given to their conservation, with the weight increasing according to the importance of the asset affected. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset must have a clear and convincing justification.

Where a proposal would affect the significance of a heritage asset, the effect should be identified and assessed, having regard to whether it would result in a positive effect, no effect, harm, substantial harm, or total loss of significance. Harm to heritage assets should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal in accordance with the relevant heritage policies of the Framework.

The Planning Practice Guidance provides further guidance on the interpretation and application of national heritage policy.

It is noted that the proposal is in close proximity to the Grade II listed Church to the south of the site. The proposal in this instance is a single storey timber outbuilding which is of a typical ancillary sporting pavilion. Due to the modest scale and sympathetic form it is considered that the proposal would not result in harm to the character and setting of the listed building.

The proposal, by virtue of its scale, design, and use of materials, is considered to preserve the setting of the listed building. It would not result in harm to the significance of any heritage assets, and no objections have been raised by the Conservation Officer.

The development is therefore considered to comply with Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

Drainage and Flood Risk

Core Policy 67 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that development does not increase flood risk on-site or elsewhere and incorporates appropriate drainage measures where necessary. Policies F7 and F8 of the National Planning Policy Framework require development to appropriately manage surface water and flood risk, ensure that drainage arrangements are effective and sustainable, and demonstrate that development will be safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

The submitted comment raising concern over the potential foul drainage is noted. In this instance the WC Drainage comment has raised no concern over the minor extent of the development proposed.

Communication with the cricket club confirms that there is currently sufficient toilet provision within the church adjacent. It is understood that these elements are very unlikely to be installed under this application due to budget constraints. As such it is considered that an appropriately worded condition could be attached to any decision notice to control the installation of the foul/waste drainage and require the submission of the additional details at a later time, in the event that they are installed. It is also noted that the management and installation of a foul drainage system is covered by separate legislation in this case the Building Regulations process.

The proposal therefore complies with Core Policy 67 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the policy in the NPPF, ensuring that flood risk is not increased and that surface water drainage is appropriately managed.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to protect and, where appropriate, enhance biodiversity and geodiversity interests. Policy N2 of the NPPF seeks to conserve and enhance biodiversity, support nature recovery, protect habitats and species, and strengthen ecological networks.

The application proposes the erection of a cricket clubhouse with an associated deck within the established grounds of an existing cricket facility. The development is located on an area of regularly maintained short-mown grassland situated around the perimeter of the cricket ground. The site is characterised by intensively managed amenity grassland which is subject to frequent mowing and recreational use and is consequently of limited ecological value.

The applicant has confirmed that the site does not comprise Priority Habitat as defined under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, nor does it contain any irreplaceable habitat. It is noted that no trees, hedgerows, scrub, ponds, watercourses or other notable ecological features are present within or immediately adjacent to the proposed development footprint. The proposal would therefore not result in the loss of any habitat considered to be of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.

The statutory biodiversity metric identifies intensively managed amenity grassland as a habitat of comparatively low distinctiveness and limited biodiversity value. The area affected by the proposal forms part of a wider maintained recreational landscape and does not provide an important ecological corridor, supporting habitat, or habitat linkage feature. The development would not fragment habitat networks or adversely affect the ecological functionality of the wider cricket ground.

Whilst the proposed clubhouse and deck would result in the loss of an area of amenity grassland, the habitat affected is of very low ecological significance and its loss would not materially diminish the biodiversity interest of the site or surrounding area. The proposal would not affect Priority Habitat, linear habitat, protected species or habitats, trees, or other sensitive ecological receptors.

Given the nature of the existing land use and the condition of the habitat present, it is considered that the overall ecological impact of the development would be negligible. The affected grassed area forms a small component of a much larger managed sports ground, and its loss would not give rise to significant adverse effects on biodiversity. Furthermore, the proposal provides opportunities for biodiversity enhancement through the incorporation of native planting, pollinator-friendly landscaping, bird nesting features or similar measures around the clubhouse, should the Local Planning Authority consider such measures appropriate.

The proposal would not result in any significant harm to habitats, ecological networks or species and is therefore acceptable from an ecological and biodiversity perspective. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in biodiversity terms and accords with the objectives of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Core Policy 50 (WCS) and the NPPF, in seeking to conserve and enhance the natural environment.

Biodiversity Net Gain

In assessing the effects of the proposal, regard has been had to Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, which establishes the framework for Biodiversity Net Gain.

The proposal may fall within the scope of the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain regime due to the size of the application site and extent of habitat affected. Although the application form confirms that the application proposal meets the 'de minimis' exemption, it has not been definitively confirmed that this is the case. Biodiversity Net Gain is a post-decision matter that is dealt with by mandatory Condition. As such, an Informative can be attached to any planning permission advising the Applicant that it is their responsibility to discharge this Condition, as necessary.

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

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

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

CONCLUSION

The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its design, character and appearance, and would not result in any unacceptable harm to the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

Furthermore, the proposal would not result in any unacceptable impacts in respect of heritage assets, flood risk and drainage.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the National Planning Policy Framework and all other relevant material considerations. As such, the application is recommended for approval, subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION: That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to conditions.

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

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

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

Location Plan (Received by LPA 24th March 2026)

1060/CAM/2026/1 Rev B Proposed Plans and Elevations (Received by LPA 15th July 2026)

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

The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match in material, colour and texture those detailed on the approved drawings and application form.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area.

Prior to the installation of foul/waste drainage full and complete details of any such installation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: The application lacked sufficient detail for the appropriate assessment to be made.