

Public Art Officer comments re: PL/2026/04207 - Land East of Church Road, Laverstock, Salisbury

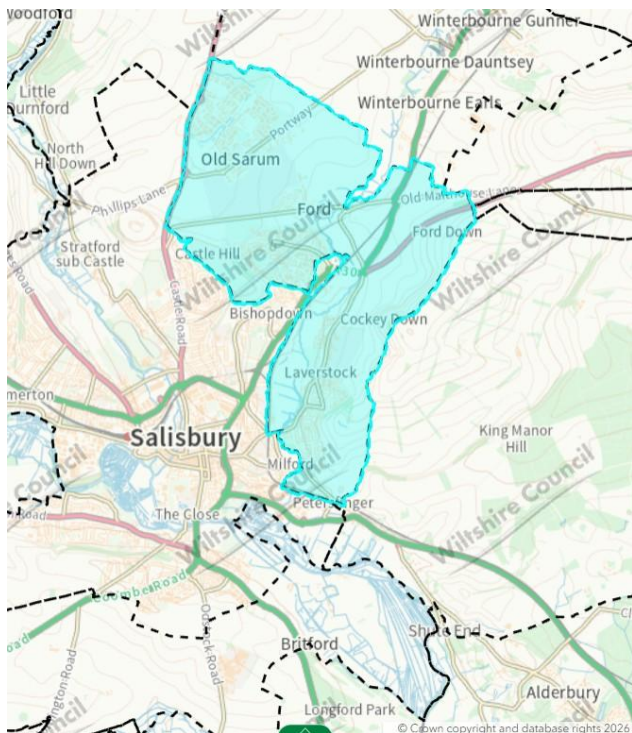
Outline planning permission (with all matters reserved except access) for the erection of up to 110 dwellings, together with access from Church Road, infrastructure including landscaping and children's play provision, a sustainable urban drainage system (SuDS), and associated utility buildings.

Land agent/developer: Hallam Land Ltd and Velcourt Group Ltd

Context

The historic village of Laverstock sits in the valley of the River Bourne and is separated from Salisbury by the railway line and C17th/18th water meadows. The village is bounded to the east by Cockney Down where there are remains of Romano-British settlements and a cemetery. Current population est.2800. The village is within the civil parish of Laverstock and Ford which is formed of the villages of Laverstock, Ford, and the communities of Bishopdown Farm (Hampton Park and Riverdown Park), Old Sarum, Longhedge and part of Milford.

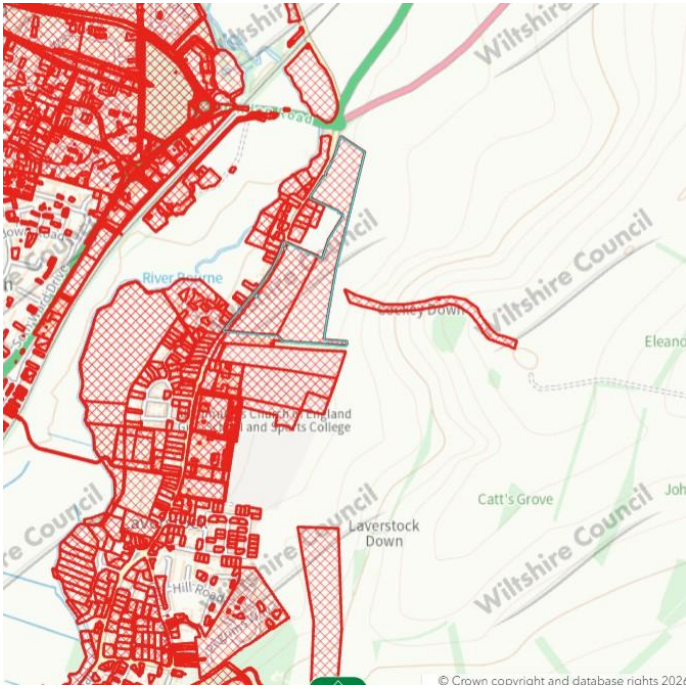
Parish boundary:



Within the context of a small village an application for up to 110 dwellings constitutes, relatively speaking, a disproportionate amount of development and a disproportionately large expansion for this area. Developments of this size can disrupt the established character, identity, and social balance of small rural settlements.

We also note that the application has been 'called in' by the Councillor for Laverstock & Milford (dated 23/8/2026) citing key issues including 'scale of development', 'design – bulk, height, general appearance', and 'visual impact upon the surrounding area'.

Map of proposed site:



In the context of large amount of development, the provision of public art is justified as a proportionate and necessary measure to mitigate its impact and support successful integration.

Site specific public art

A scheme/s to integrate the proposed development with existing residents' houses located along the length of the western edge of the proposed site (on Church Road) and to the south of the site (towards Bishops Mead), thereby supporting place-shaping, village identity, community cohesion, and enabling scheme that is accessible to as many of the existing and new residents, as possible.

Rationale

The provision of public art is justified as a proportionate and necessary measure to both mitigate the impact of development, and support its successful integration.

Public art provides a means of embedding locally responsive elements that can reflect the area's history, culture and environment, helping development to feel assimilated rather than imposed.

Our guidance on public art was adopted by Cabinet in 2024, and the Council is able to demonstrate a robust methodology benchmarked against several other authorities. There is an identified specific site-based requirement as a result of this development, and we can point to several appeals where public art contributions have been found compliant and secured.

You will also note the recent Secretary of State decision - dated 28 July 2026 - re: PL/2024/07097 - Land South of Snarlton Farm, Snarlton Lane, Melksham, SN12 7QP - APP/Y3940/W/25/3373278, which agrees with the submitted CIL compliance statement which makes reference to the public art contribution (as does the agreed S106):

Planning obligations

32. The Secretary of State has had regard to the Inspector's analysis at IR12.76-12.80, the planning obligation dated 5 February 2026, paragraph 58 of the Framework, the Guidance and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010, as amended. For the reasons given at IR12.79, she agrees with the Inspector's conclusion that the obligation complies with Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations 2010 and the tests at paragraph 58 of the Framework.

Public Art contributions provide a policy compliant mechanism that will help mitigate the impact of this development while also assisting integration with existing and incoming communities. This is essential in the context of the village of Laverstock to create a sense of place and so as not to undermine community cohesion with regards to WCS CP3, WCS CP57 and NPPF

Contribution threshold

- Development of 50 dwellings and more
- £300 per residential dwelling

Indicative figure

Using planning obligations, the indicative public art contribution figure for a site of 110 dwellings would be £33,000 (see: threshold and calculation) to be commuted prior to commencement to Wiltshire Council's Arts Service to devise and manage the scheme/s.

The Public Art Officer (publicart@wiltshire.gov.uk) encourages early engagement from Developers regarding sites/schemes that may be incorporated into the Development or the vicinity of the Development.

Contribution calculation

To provide a consistent, sustainable and transparent approach for our Public Art programme, our communities and Developers, Wiltshire Council has held its 'fixed per dwelling' figure since its implementation in 2009.

The 2009 figure was calculated* using the internationally established Public Art funding mechanism, Percent for Art** i.e. up to 1% of capital costs derived from an average build cost per residential dwelling in England. In this case, taking a conservative approach of 0.5% and the lower end of a typical standard newbuild.

*[*build cost per dwelling (RICS) x average floor space per dwelling (English Housing Survey) = lower end of average cost per dwelling (c£60,000 in 2009) x 0.5%*

***Percent for Art is an internationally established funding mechanism implemented by authorities, development corporations and housing associations for the commissioning of public art. Normal practice is for up to 1% of capital costs to be allocated for public art]*

Summary

Public art is widely recognised within the planning system as a key component of place-making, contributing to distinctive, higher quality environments that go beyond purely functional design and instead create places that reflect local identity and aspirations.

Public art also plays an important role in supporting community cohesion and well-being by creating shared spaces and experiences that bring together existing and new residents, acting as a bridge between communities and helping to foster a sense of belonging.

Community involvement in the delivery of public art schemes encourages participation and dialogue, strengthening social connections, and helping communities adapt to change.

More broadly, it supports and contributes to civic pride, legibility and the usability of public spaces, while reinforcing a shared identity and delivering long-term social value.

As such, public art should not be viewed as decorative but as a legitimate planning tool that supports the assimilation of new development, and the creation of cohesive, inclusive communities.

As per our public art guidance and process, by locating a public art scheme/s along the boundary with Church Road and/or towards Bishops Mead, it is possible to adopt a more effective and strategic approach to aid place-shaping, integration and support cohesion in accordance with the WCS CP3, WCS CP57, WDG 4.3 Expectation: Destinations, Landmarks and Focal Points, and the NPPF (Aug 2026).

Policy and guidance

- *WCS CP3: Infrastructure Requirements [pg. 58, para 4.42]. This promotes and defines public art as a type of place-shaping infrastructure and states that the cost of providing infrastructure may be met through the use of planning obligations.*
- *WCS CP 57: Ensuring high quality design and place-shaping [page 287, paragraph xii] which promotes “...the integration of art and design in the public realm”*
- *WDG SPD 4.3.4: “Consider utilising public art to reinforce the landmark status of a place. Public art used for this purpose should have permanence and relevance to the local or wider context of the place. (See also Wiltshire’s Policy and guidance on Public Art and Design)”*
- *Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (2016) refers to the 2011 guidance note for art and design in the public realm [pg. 31, para 10]. This is superseded by [Art and design in the public realm in Wiltshire – 2024 Guidance](#) which is also referenced in the aforementioned Wiltshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (v9, 2024)*

In addition - to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, the NPPF (17.b) recognises “cultural wellbeing” as a ‘social objective’ - one of the three overarching objectives in achieving sustainable development.

While awaiting the consolidation of the new PPG - the National Design Guide (NDG) still stands as a material consideration and complements the NPPF and states: “The quality of the spaces between buildings is as important as the buildings themselves. Public spaces are streets, squares, and other spaces that are open to all. They are the setting for most movement. The design of a public space encompasses its siting and integration into the wider network of routes as well as its various elements. These include areas allocated to different users – cars, cyclists and pedestrians – for different purposes such as movement or parking, hard and soft surfaces, street furniture, lighting, signage and public art.” [Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive]