

FAO Adrian Smith – Senior Planning Officer
Wiltshire Council
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

By email: Adrian.Smith@wiltshire.gov.uk

20 July 2026

Dear Adrian,

PL/2026/00367 OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, LAND EAST OF CALNE ROAD, LYNEHAM

Introduction

I write in relation to the above Site at Land East of Calne Road, Lyneham, following correspondence with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and comments received from the Council's Arboricultural Officer in February 2026.

This note has been prepared to provide further detail on the access optioneering process undertaken for the Site, including the considerations that informed the selection of the proposed Site access and the associated requirement for the proposed removal of 4 no. trees, including those within Council-owned land. It responds to comments raised by the Local Planning Authority (Appendix 1), in particular concerns regarding the proposed removal of Trees T3 and T4, which have been identified as Category A trees.

This note summarises how the proposed access design seeks to balance highway safety requirements, engineering constraints, arboricultural considerations and the overall deliverability of the development, while minimising impacts wherever reasonably practicable.

Design Optioneering and Justification

As stated within the application, the proposed development necessitates the removal of four trees: a low-quality Horse Chestnut in a declining condition (T1), a moderate quality Ash (T2) and two high quality Lime (T3 and T4) north of the proposed site access junction to achieve the necessary visibility splays.

Highways and Arboriculture Justification

Calne Road is currently subject to a 40/50 mph speed limit, therefore, the proposed access has been designed in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) standards. While DMRB permits limited tolerance for isolated, narrow vertical obstructions (such as signs, posts or lighting columns) within visibility envelopes, it does not extend this tolerance to multiple tree trunks. The presence of several tree trunks within a visibility envelope creates a cumulative visual barrier, and tree trunks, whether partially or wholly within the envelope, are classed as obstructions.

The retention of these trees, and the combined effect of their trunks, would create a significant obstruction or “shadow” within the northern visibility splay, reducing the available visibility to an unacceptable level and giving rise to a material road safety concern (Appendix 2). Pruning of these trees alone would not be sufficient to achieve the required visibility splays. As a result, the four trees to the north of the proposed Site access junction are proposed to be removed.

The trees proposed for removal have been assessed within the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA). Of these, Trees T1 and T2 are categorised as poor-quality specimens, and it is noted that no objections have been raised by the Council's Arboricultural Officer in respect of their removal.

Consideration was given to locating the Site access further south along the Calne Road frontage. However, this option would have required the removal of a substantially greater extent of existing roadside vegetation, including mature hedgerow sections and up to 7 trees (T3 and T4 as well as T5-T8 and G9). Furthermore, the proposed site access is also located within the existing 40mph speed limit zone, which transitions to a 50mph speed limit further south along Calne Road. This alternative southern access option was not considered to represent a preferable solution from either an arboricultural or highway design perspective and therefore was discounted.

Planning Justification

The proposed site access junction, which has been selected as the most practical point of entry to the development, aligns with the established settlement pattern and surrounding highway network, providing a clear arrival point whilst facilitating safe vehicle, pedestrian and cycle movements.

North Wiltshire Local Plan (2011) Policy NE14 has been referenced by the Arboricultural officer and states:

“Permission will not be granted for proposals that would result, or be likely to result, in the loss of trees, hedges, lakes/ponds or other important landscape or ecological features that could be successfully and appropriately incorporated into the design of a development.”

Whilst Policy NE14 seeks to resist the loss of trees, it does not impose an absolute presumption against tree removal. Rather, the policy requires consideration of whether such features can be appropriately accommodated within the design. Given the highway design requirements of the proposed access, it is considered that T3 and T4 cannot be retained without prejudicing the safe and effective delivery of the development.

The proposal has sought to minimise impacts on existing vegetation wherever possible. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment confirms that existing trees and hedgerows across the Site will be retained where practicable, with only those removals necessary to facilitate the development proposed. To mitigate the loss of T3 and T4, a comprehensive landscape strategy is proposed, including approximately 890 metres of native hedgerow planting and new boundary tree planting using appropriate native species. This mitigation will not only compensate for the limited loss of tree cover but will enhance the overall landscape structure, increase species diversity and strengthen ecological connectivity across the Site.

When considered in the planning balance, the limited harm arising from the loss of T3 and T4 is significantly outweighed by the wider benefits of the development. These include the delivery of much-needed housing, including affordable housing provision, enhanced pedestrian and cycle connectivity, economic benefits through construction employment and increased local expenditure, and investment in local services and facilities.

Given the Council's current inability to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, the loss of two unprotected trees is considered to carry limited weight. Accordingly, it is

considered that the proposed mitigation, together with the substantial benefits of the scheme, provide clear justification for the removal of Trees T3 and T4.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed access arrangement has been developed following consideration of the site-specific constraints, highway safety requirements and arboricultural impacts. The need to remove Trees T1, T2, T3 and T4 arises from the requirement to achieve compliant visibility splays in accordance with DMRB standards and to ensure a safe means of access to serve the proposed development.

Whilst the concern around the loss of Trees T3 and T4 is acknowledged, the access design has been informed by an iterative process that sought to minimise impacts on existing trees and hedgerows wherever reasonably practicable, including through the consideration of alternative access locations. The proposed access location represents the option that best balances highway safety requirements and site deliverability with the retention of existing landscape features.

On balance, it is considered that the limited and justified loss of trees necessary to facilitate a safe and suitable access is outweighed by the wider benefits of the proposed development. The proposal has sought to avoid and minimise tree loss wherever possible and includes mitigation through replacement planting and ecological enhancement measures. Accordingly, the proposal is considered to reflect the objectives of Local Plan Policy NE14 and Core Policies 52 and 57 and represents the most suitable and deliverable means of providing access to the Site.

Yours sincerely

Gareth Wilson
Senior Director
Twenty5 Planning Ltd

Appendix 1 – Arboriculturist Officer Comment (dated 16 February 2026)

North Wiltshire Local Plan (2011)

- NE14: Trees, site features and the control of new development (Saved Policy).

Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015)

- Core Policy 52: Green infrastructure
- Core Policy 57: Ensuring high quality design and place shaping

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- NPPF Section 15, Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
- BS 5837:2012 - Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendation

This outline application is for the Outline planning application (with all matters reserved except for access) for up to 200 residential dwellings (Use Class C3), provision of public open space, and associated infrastructure - Land East of Calne Road, Lyneham, Nr. Chippenham, Wiltshire.

I note from the information provided in relation to trees that four individual trees are highlighted for removal. T1 Horse Chestnut 'C' category, T2 Ash 'B' category and T3 and T4 Lime both 'A' category trees which are proposed for removal to achieve a visibility splay for the proposed access.

I do have concerns with regard to the removal of T3 and T4 as 'A' category trees must be retained as part of the planning process. They are noted to be trees of high quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of 40 years plus. Due to their contribution to the surrounding area, they would qualify for protection under a Tree Preservation Order.

The trees are shown to be outside the red line of the proposed site and shown to be within the ownership of Wiltshire Council.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023) seeks to ensure that new development is sustainable and underlines the importance of green infrastructure, of which trees form an integral part. This includes recognition of the importance of trees in relation to the management of air, soil and water quality along with other associated ecosystem services and climate change adaption. The NPPF also seeks to achieve the protection and enhancement of landscapes and a net gain in biodiversity. Finally, it specifically identifies veteran and ancient trees and woodland as a highly valuable and irreplaceable habitat.

North Wiltshire Local Plan (2011)

NE14: Trees, site features and the control of new development (Saved Policy)

Permission will not be granted for proposals that would result, or be likely to result, in the loss of

trees, hedges, lakes/ponds or other important landscape or ecological features that could be successfully and appropriately incorporated into the design of a development.

Further consideration should be given to the proposed access design to ensure the retention of important highway trees.

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