

Date of Meeting	31 January 2019
Application Number	18/10309/FUL
Site Address	Old Manor Farm Yard, Old Manor Farm, Chandlers Lane, Bishops Cannings SN10 2JZ
Proposal	Demolition of agricultural buildings and erection of two detached dwellings and associated works.
Applicant	Mr & Mrs Sheppard
Town/Parish Council	BISHOPS CANNINGS
Electoral Division	Urchfont and The Cannings – Councillor Phillip Whitehead
Grid Ref	403646 164283
Type of application	Full Planning
Case Officer	Morgan Jones

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

In accordance with the Council's 'Scheme of Delegation Specific to Planning', this application is brought to committee at the request of Councillor Philip Whitehead on the grounds of the 'visual impact on surrounding area' and 'relationship to adjoining properties'.

1. Purpose of Report

To assess the merits of the proposal against the policies of the development plan and other material considerations and to consider the recommendation to refuse planning permission.

The key issues for consideration are:-

- Principle of development;
- Design and impact on heritage assets & landscape character;
- Ecological impact;
- Impact on highway safety.

2. Site Description

This application site relates to an area of land at Old Manor Farm Yard, Chandlers Lane, Bishops Cannings. The site comprises the former agricultural buildings associated with Old Manor Farm. The Old Manor Farmhouse itself, which is Grade II Listed, lies to the south of the site and is within the applicant's ownership. The Farmhouse has been damaged by fire but planning permission and listed consent have been granted for all of the dwelling to be rebuilt. The whole site lies within the Bishops Cannings Conservation Area and the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Site Location Plan

3. The Proposal

The application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of the existing agricultural buildings and the erection of two detached dwellings and associated works. The dwellings will be sited on the footprints of the buildings to be demolished as shown on the proposed site plan:



Proposed Site Plan

The Planning Statement explains that “as well as echoing the plan arrangement and extent of the existing buildings, the proposed buildings also deliberately reflect the characteristics of the superstructures. For example, the eaves and ridge heights of the proposed Dwelling 1 (3.8m and 6.9m) and Dwelling 2 (3.4m and 5.9m) reflect those of the nearby former stable block which is to be retained as an ancillary outbuilding to the Old Manor Farmhouse (at 3.4m and 6.6m respectively). The sizes of the buildings that are to be removed are also reflected in the proposal”. The external elevations of the dwellings would primarily be finished with timber boarding and the roofs with profiled metal sheets with black metal roof lights. The front elevation of each dwelling is shown below:



Proposed Dwelling no. 1



Proposed Dwelling no. 2

The application is supported by the following reports and drawings:

- Document. Planning Statement (October 2018) by RCC Town Planning;
- Document. Preliminary Ecological Assessment & Phase 2 Bat Surveys (July 2018) by Gareth Harris Ecology & Conservation;
- Document. Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Constraints Plan (ref 18.781) by WHLandscape;
- Document. Heritage Assessment (October 2018) by Ian Lund.

- Drawing no.3439-01 (Plans & Elevations for New Dwelling 1 [showing Location Plan, Block Plan, & Proposed Site Plan]);
- Drawing no.3439-02 (Plans & Elevations for New Dwelling 1);
- Drawing no.3439-03 (Plans & Elevations for New Dwelling 2);
- Drawing no.3439-04 (Diagram for Yard Access Visibility Splays);
- Drawing no.19119-200-01 RevD [showing existing site / topographical plan].

4. Planning Policy

The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2018)** with particular regard to Chapters 4 'Decision-Making', 5 'Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes', '9 'Promoting Sustainable Transport', 12 'Achieving Well-Designed Places', 15 'Conserving & Enhancing the Natural Environment' and ' 16 'Conserving & Enhancing the Historic Environment' .

The adopted **Wiltshire Core Strategy**, with particular regard to:

- Core Policy 1 Settlement Strategy;
- Core Policy 2 Delivery Strategy;
- Core Policy 3 Infrastructure Requirements;
- Core Policy 12 Spatial Strategy: Devizes Community Area;
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Core Policy 51 Landscape;
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 58 Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment
- Core Policy 60 Sustainable Transport;
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development;
- Core Policy 67 Flood Risk;
- Core Policy 68 Water Resources;

The made **Devizes Area Neighbourhood Plan** (July 2015 Referendum Version), with particular regard to:

- H1 Strategic Policy Intent - Settlement Framework Boundary
- H2 Strategic Police Intent – Built Environment & Sustainability
- T1 Strategic Policy Intent - Getting Around
- ESD1 Strategic Policy Intent - Environment & Sustainability

The made Devizes Area Neighbourhood Plan is jointly produced by the neighbouring parishes of Bishops Cannings, Devizes and Roundway. These contain the whole urban area centred on Devizes and the rural hinterland. The Plan fits within the broader Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2016: Car Parking Strategy (March 2011).

5. Consultations

Wessex Water – No objection, standard advice and guidance provided.

Wiltshire Council Highways – No objection, subject to conditions to secure the layout, parking spaces and visibility splay as shown on the submitted plans. .

Wiltshire Council Landscape Officer – No observations.

Wiltshire Council Conservation Officer – Objection on the ground of poor design and subsequent impact on the setting of the listed farmhouse building and the character and appearance of the Bishops Canning Conservation Area.

Wiltshire Council Arboricultural Officer – No objection, subject to a condition to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with an Arboricultural Method Statement.

Bishops Cannings Parish Council – No observations received.

6. Publicity

The application has been publicised via site and press notices, and letters sent to the occupiers of properties within close proximity of the site. As a result of the publicity, two letters have been received expressing support for the proposal because it is considered that the redevelopment of the site has the potential to improve its appearance. One of the letters, however, states that the contemporary design of the proposed 2 new dwellings is such that they will not sit well with the very sensitive nature of this site. The suitability of the proposed materials, such as the profiled metal roof, is also questioned and it is suggested that traditional materials, such as slate tiles, would be more appropriate. The letter also outlines that it is the author's greatest concern that there is a real risk that the Grade II listed thatched farmhouse will never be re-built. No attempt has been made to protect what remains and it is said the applicants wish to live in one of the new houses on the site and do not intend to re-build the farmhouse themselves.

7. Planning Considerations

7.1 Principle of Development

The local development plan document is made up of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) (adopted January 2015) and the Devizes Area Neighbourhood Plan (DANP) (made July 2015).

In the interests of promoting sustainable development and the protection of the countryside the policies of the plan seek to restrict all new residential development to locations within the Limits of Development defined for towns and villages. The WCS includes a settlement strategy, Core Policy 1 'Settlement Strategy' and Core Policy 2 'Delivery Strategy' outline that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development within the Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Large Villages and development should be restricted to within the limits of development other than in exceptional circumstances as set out within the relevant core policies contained within the plan (outlined within paragraph 4.25 of the WCS i.e. rural exception sites and specialist accommodation).

The housing policies of the DANP (i.e. H1 Strategic Policy Intent - Settlement Framework Boundary & H2 Strategic Police Intent – Built Environment & Sustainability) are consistent with the WCS settlement strategy as they seek to contain new housing within the existing settlement framework boundary (which equates with the Limits of Development within the WCS), identified within the plan.

The site falls within the Devizes Community Area on the western side of Bishops Cannings. The settlement is classed as a 'Small Village' by Core Policy 12 'Settlement Strategy: Devizes Community Area' of the WCS. The settlements identified as Small Villages do not have Limits of Development, however the WCS settlement strategy does allow 'infill' within the existing built up area of Small Villages provided proposals meet the housing needs of settlements and subject to the following criteria:

1. Respects the existing character and form of the settlement;
2. Does not elongate the village or impose development in sensitive landscape areas;
3. Does not consolidate an existing sporadic loose knit area of development related to the settlement.

The WCS clarifies that for the purposes of the settlement strategy, 'infill' is defined as the filling of a small gap within the village that is only large enough for not more than a few dwellings, generally only one dwelling. Exceptions to this approach will only be considered through the neighbourhood plan process or development plan documents.

The site comprises the farmyard and former modern agricultural buildings associated with Old Manor Farm on the edge of the village. The pattern of development along Chandlers Lane is irregular with the northern and western boundaries of the site adjoining open agricultural land. The redevelopment of the site, which cannot be classified as brownfield land, through the construction of two new dwellings is not considered to represent natural infill within the built up area of the village under the settlement strategy of the WCS.

The Planning Statement argues that it “is certainly not an isolated site nor is it physically or visually detached from the settlement. It is a small and enclosed farmyard which relates to Old Manor Farmhouse and is part of the established streetscene of the village centre”. It is agreed that the site is not isolated or physically detached from the village and is adjacent to Chandlers Lane. The site, however is on the periphery of the village and its redevelopment would not represent the natural infilling of a gap within the built environment, in particular due to the size of the site and the agricultural land to the north and west.

The proposed development is therefore not considered to represent ‘infill’ and as such, would conflict with the residential policies of the WCS and DANP. Furthermore, no information has been submitted to demonstrate that the dwellings have been designed for, and will meet the housing need of the settlement.

7.2 Design, Landscape Impact, and Heritage Impact

The Heritage Assessment (October 2018) by Ian Lund advises that “If carefully designed a low-rise and low-key redevelopment of the Old Manor Farmhouse and farmyard offers the potential to resuscitate the fire damaged listed building, and to breathe new life into the redundant stable block and farmyard. A sympathetic scheme would provide a rare opportunity to provide accommodation in the village that will help with the stewardship of the landscape, and enliven the village without detracting from its rural essence”.

The proposed development has been designed in line with recommendations made within the Heritage Assessment, however it should be highlighted that the application site consists of the modern barns and associated farmyard and the field behind the farmhouse. The listed Old Manor Farmhouse and the adjacent 19th century stable block, which is considered to be a curtilage listed structure associated with the farmhouse, lie outside of the application site but within the applicant’s ownership. The proposal involves the demolition of the modern agricultural buildings and the construction of two new dwellings on their footprints. There are no associated plans for the repair and restoration of the stable building or an update in relation to the re-building of the Old Manor Farmhouse.

The proposal is described in detail within the Planning Statement and it is highlighted that the yard, as a whole, is considered to make a positive contribution to the conservation area by virtue of its traditional layout and associations with past farming practices within the village. It is then subsequently argued that the low-key redevelopment of the yard, will enable the long-term retention of the simple courtyard form at the site, and the replacement of modern utilitarian buildings with those of a higher quality, without affecting the significance of the listed Old Manor Farmhouse.

The redevelopment of the yard with two new houses would undoubtedly result in the loss of the pure agricultural character of the site. The Council’s Conservation Officer does, however agree that the buildings to be removed are of no architectural or historic merit and that their replacement with more aesthetically pleasing buildings could potentially enhance the appearance of the area. The Officer is, however of the opinion that the design of the current proposal does not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the site:-

“For example, dwelling 1 has a similar footprint but slightly increased height and bulk than the existing barn. The existing building is a barn and its form reflects this use. The proposed scheme is for a residential unit but retains the footprint with wide gable, high eaves with large openings for windows and doors. Its mass and scale does not reflect the traditional mass and proportions of traditional dwellings nor traditional farm buildings in the area. Dwelling 1 is located close to the grade II listed farmhouse and the stable and I am of the view that in its current form it would compete visually with the Old Farmhouse and stable, rather than appearing as a subservient ancillary building. This is contrary to policies C57 and C58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

The application infers a positive benefit for the historic environment however it is unclear what this would be. The farm buildings are lost and whilst the farmyard area is retained the scale of the new houses does not reflect the traditional scale and form of the local area. In addition, there would be some harm to the setting of the listed building.

The agricultural buildings add to the significance of the grade II listed farmhouse as part of the historic farmstead. However the replacement of the farm buildings with new houses with a mass and form which competes with the listed building would cause harm to its significance. The loss of agricultural character will have an adverse impact on the conservation area. ...

I am of the view that the scheme due to its footprint, bulk, mass, scale and overall design will harm the setting of the listed building and the character and appearance of the conservation area and should therefore be refused. There is the potential for it to have an adverse impact on the viability of the farmhouse as its historic landholding is being reduced and this could jeopardise its reconstruction. It is contrary to policies C57 and C58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Chapter 16 of the NPPF”.

The duty placed on the Council under section 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess. Furthermore, the duty placed on the Council under Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the requirement to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas.

Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) includes the policies on conservation of the historic environment, with the main underlying policy being that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. At the local level, Core Policy 58 of the WCS seeks to ensure that development proposals protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment and Core Policy 57 seeks to secure good design in all new developments.

The Council's Conservation Officer has advised that the proposed development would result in less than substantial harm to the setting of the listed Old Manor Farmhouse building and the character and appearance of the Bishops Canning Conservation Area. As such, in line with paragraph 196 of the NPPF, where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against public benefits of the proposals including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. The proposed development does not, however deliver any public benefits that would outweigh the harm. The scheme would result in the provision of two new dwellings but the DANP does not identify a need for development at the site and the application does not demonstrate that the dwellings have been designed to meet a demonstrable local need. The application asserts that there would be a wider heritage benefit through the preservation

of the former stable building, however it does not form part of this planning application. The Conservation Officer highlighted that the farmyard area would be retained but the buildings replaced with houses and separated off from the historic farmhouse so the historic entity would be lost, and there are no other heritage benefits. Furthermore, the Officer highlighted concerns in relation to the lack of progress in repair of the Farmhouse itself.

In light of the above, the proposed development is considered to conflict with Core Policies 57 and 58 of the WCS and Policy ESD1 'Environment – Sustainability' of the DANP due to the design of the development and its impact on designated heritage assets. It is, however considered that there will be no harm to wider landscape character or the special qualities of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty because the site is well contained by mature boundary trees.

The Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Constraints Plan (ref 18.781) by WHLandscape does identify that a number of the trees will be removed to accommodate the development. The Council's Arboricultural Officer does not object to the proposal subject to the approval of an Arboricultural Method Statement to manage the works and the planting of replacement trees where appropriate. The Officer advised that the recommendation of the Tree Survey report would improve the quality of the retained tree stock, as well as the site as a whole, without any major detriment to the overall landscape appearance.

The retention of the mature landscaped boundaries will ensure very little inter-visibility with neighbouring properties and therefore the proposal will have a negligible impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring residents.

7.3 Impact on Ecology

Core Policy 50 'Biodiversity & Geodiversity' of the WCS outlines that all development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale. There is an expectation that such features shall be retained, buffered, and managed favourably in order to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term.

The application is therefore supported by a Preliminary Ecological Assessment & Phase 2 Bat Surveys (July 2018) by Gareth Harris Ecology & Conservation. The report concludes that the proposed development will not harm any protected species and no further surveys are recommended; and that no mitigation is required to offset any negative impacts upon roosting bats.

7.4 Impact on Highway & Pedestrian Safety

Core Policies 60 'Sustainable Transport' and 61 'Transport and New Development' of the WCS seek to ensure that new developments are located within sustainable locations and are designed to encourage the use of sustainable transport facilities. Core Policy 61 also seeks to ensure that all new developments are capable of being served by safe access to the highway network.

The Council's Highways Development Control Officer advised that the adjacent road network is rural in nature but able to accommodate two-way traffic and the vehicle movements associated with 2 dwellings. Furthermore, the access and visibility splay shown on the submitted plans is considered acceptable along with the layout of the development and amount of parking. The Officer therefore offers no objection to the proposal subject to conditions to secure the layout, parking spaces and visibility splay prior to the occupation of the development.

8. Conclusion

The application seeks full planning permission to redevelop the farmyard associated with The Old Manor Farmhouse, Bishops Cannings. The site lies on the periphery of the village and is within an agricultural use, with agricultural land to the north and west of the farmyard. The provision of new residential development at the site is not supported by the settlement strategy of the Wiltshire Core Strategy or residential policies of the Devizes Area Neighbourhood Plan which limit new development with the village to infill only. The development is not considered to represent 'infill' which is defined as the filling of a small gap within the built up area of the village. Furthermore, it has not been demonstrated that the development has been designed to meet the housing needs of the settlement.

The redevelopment of the farmyard with two new houses would result in the loss of the original agricultural character of the site; however, an opportunity does exist to enhance the appearance of the area through the demolition of the modern buildings and sensitive redevelopment of the area. It is however considered that the proposed dwellings, by reason of their footprints, bulk, mass, scale and overall design, would have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the site. The proposed dwellings would result in the loss of the agricultural use and character of the site which, coupled with the proposed design, would have an adverse impact on designated heritage assets; namely, the setting of the grade II listed farmhouse and the character and appearance of the Bishops Cannings Conservation Area. The development would result in 'less than substantial' harm to the designated heritage assets and the public benefits of the scheme would not outweigh the harm that would be caused to the heritage assets.

In light of the above, it is recommended that planning permission be refused.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

1. **The proposed development, due to the position of the site within the 'open countryside' on the periphery of the village of Bishops Cannings, would conflict with the settlement strategy of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and residential policies of the Devizes Area Neighbourhood Plan. The site is within an agricultural use on the edge of the village and the redevelopment of the site to accommodate two new detached dwellings would not represent 'infill' within the existing built area of the village. Furthermore, it has not been demonstrated that the development has been designed to meet the housing needs of the settlement.**

The proposed development is therefore deemed to be unsustainable and would conflict with the Council's plan-led approach to sustainable development. The Council can demonstrate a deliverable 5 year housing land supply within the East Housing Market Area and there are no exceptional circumstances or material planning considerations which justify the approval of the proposed development.

In light of the above the proposed development would conflict with Chapters 4 'Decision-Making', 5 'Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes', and 9 'Promoting Sustainable Transport' of the National Planning Policy Framework (2018), Core Policies 1 'Settlement Strategy', 2 'Delivery Strategy', 12 'Spatial Strategy: Devizes Community Area'; 60 'Sustainable Transport' and 61 'Transport and New Development' of the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015), and policies H1 'Strategic Policy Intent - Settlement Framework Boundary', H2 'Strategic Policy Intent - Built Environment & Sustainability' and T1 'Strategic Policy Intent - Getting Around' of the made Devizes Area Neighbourhood Plan (2015).

2. **The proposed dwellings, by reason of their footprints, bulk, mass, scale and overall design, would have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the area. The provision of two dwellings would result in the loss of the agricultural use and character of the site, which coupled with the proposed design, would have an adverse impact on the significance of designated heritage assets; namely, the setting of the grade II listed farmhouse and the character and appearance of the Bishops Cannings Conservation Area. The development would result in less than substantial harm to these designated heritage assets and the public benefits of the scheme would not outweigh the harm that would be caused to the heritage assets.**

In light of the above the proposed development would conflict with Chapters 12 'Achieving Well-Designed Places' and 16 'Conserving & Enhancing the Historic Environment' of the National Planning Policy Framework (2018), Core Policies 57 'Ensuring High Quality Design' and 58 'Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment' of the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015), Policy ESD1 'Strategic Policy Intent - Environment & Sustainability' of the made Devizes Area Neighbourhood Plan (2015), and Sections 16(2) & 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.