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## Report

**SUBJECT:** Planning application S/2007/2046 – Demolition of existing agricultural buildings, existing dwelling and outbuildings. Construction of replacement dwelling and replacement agricultural buildings at Wisma Farm, Berwick St. James, Salisbury.

**REPORT TO:** Planning and Regulatory Committee

**DATE:** 12<sup>th</sup> February 2008

**AUTHOR:** Adam Madge

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### Report Summary:

To consider a full application for the demolition of an existing bungalow, redundant poultry sheds and silos, and other outbuildings and redevelopment of the site by the erection of a replacement dwelling together with new, (which replace the existing) agricultural buildings. The application also includes associated access works and landscaping.

The application has been brought before the Planning and Regulatory Committee because the Northern Area Committee's recommendation is considered to be a material departure from Policy H30 of Salisbury District Councils retained planning policies. The Northern Area Committee considered the previously circulated report of the Head of Development Services (included in an amended version below) at the meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2008 and the Committee made the following recommendation:

### Recommended to the Planning and Regulatory Committee –

- (1) That, the above application be **APPROVED** for the following reasons:
- i) there would be a general environmental gain to the site from the proposed development.
  - ii) the proposal would retain an agricultural use on the site.
  - iii) the development would enhance the special landscape area in which it is situated.
  - iv) the proposed development is considered to be of an appropriate size for the site.



Awarded in:  
Housing Services  
Waste and Recycling Services



the committee wished to impose the following conditions;

- i) a condition requiring the removal of the existing chicken sheds prior to first occupation of the new dwelling.
- ii) a condition requiring the closure of the site entrance adjacent the existing hay barn prior to first occupation of the new dwelling.
- iii) a condition requiring limiting permitted development rights to the area within the curtilage of the proposed new dwelling.

**The Northern Area Committee considered the following officer's report before making its recommendation. The officers report has been amended.**

Members should note the amendments primarily take account of the late correspondence received at the last Northern area committee and also amend the report in respect of the agricultural use of the proposed loose boxes. Members should also note that officers have received from the applicants agents an agricultural justification for the proposed agricultural buildings and this is included in full as appendix A. This was received very shortly before this officer report was completed and therefore officers had not had the opportunity to review this report. Therefore if members consider this report as crucial to their decision on whether to grant planning permission they may wish to consider whether to defer the application to get a professional opinion on the report.

#### REASON FOR REPORT TO MEMBERS

Councillor West has requested that this item be determined by Committee due to the strong local interest shown in the application including the parish council views.

#### SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

The application site comprises a currently unused poultry farm that is located on the eastern side of the B3083, about 700 metres to the north of the village of Berwick St James and approximately 350 metres to the south of the junction of the B3083 with the A303. The site is also located a short distance (about 150 metres) to the south west of the settlement boundary of Winterbourne Stoke. The B3083, from which the site is accessed, links into the A303 west of Winterbourne Stoke and into the A36 at Stapleford.

The site extends to an area of about 2.2 hectares and was formerly used as a poultry farm and has been occupied by two timber framed poultry sheds that were constructed from blockwork and timber boarding and measured about 80m x 15m, together with ancillary grain silos that are located at the eastern end of these units. The existing poultry sheds are both single storey and are relatively low-key buildings in terms of their overall height, although the grain silos stand at a much greater overall height. There were also two large areas of hardstanding to the southern side of the poultry sheds where two former poultry units that have been destroyed by fire previously stood. In addition, there is also a steel framed hay barn measuring about 12m x 18m that is located close to the site frontage and is enclosed by metal cladding to the road (west) elevation.

The site is also occupied by a detached, single storey bungalow that is located towards the south eastern corner of the site. The existing dwelling has a pitched roof form and is finished in render under a concrete tiled roof. As such, the site is clearly divided into two separate uses, the agricultural use that occupies about three quarters of the site area and the residential area that occupies the remainder of the site. There are also several small outbuildings scattered around the eastern end of the overall site.

The remainder of the site forms an open and grassed area that is largely devoid of vegetation and effectively forms an agricultural field. The site is generally level, although the area of land

between the existing poultry sheds and the frontage boundary forms a small terrace at a slightly higher level to the rest of the site and there is a gentle slope down towards the east. The boundaries of the site are predominantly demarcated by post and wire fencing, although there is a conifer screen along part of the length of the northern boundary and a line of hawthorn trees along about half the length of the frontage boundary to the site.

The site has two vehicular access points from the B3083, one at each end of the frontage (western) boundary to the site.

The site is located outside of any settlement boundaries within the open countryside of the Special Landscape Area.

## THE PROPOSAL

This application seeks planning permission to demolish the existing bungalow, the redundant poultry sheds and silos, and other outbuildings and to redevelop the whole site by the erection of a replacement dwelling together with three additional garages a large cycle store and garden store. The proposal also includes the development of a tractor shed and farm office along with a number of loose boxes. The proposal also includes associated access works and landscaping.

The proposed replacement dwelling has been designed with a traditional façade to the principal front elevation to reflect the design of a manor/farmhouse and is proposed to be finished in brick and flint elevations under a clay/slate tile roof. The property will be two-storeys in height with a fairly steeply pitched hipped roof form and will accommodate the principal habitable accommodation (Drawing room, study, Dining room, kitchen etc) on the ground floor with 4 bedrooms (two en-suite) and a bathroom at the first floor level.

Attached to the side of the property is a triple garage, a garden store area and an additional cycle store. These are housed in a single storey building with a steeply pitched roof constructed of slate/clay. The walls to this building are clad in weatherboarding.

The proposal also includes the erection of an associated agricultural block and an additional machine store and farm office. The agricultural block will incorporate five loose boxes to house the applicant's livestock, one of which is a double size box. The loose boxes in a similar style to the house will have clay/slate roof with timber weatherboarding to the sides. The proposed machine store will be triple bayed and a farm office with toilet is proposed adjacent the store. Similarly to the loose boxes the building will be part timber clad but will also be flint and brick with a clay/slate roof.

In addition to the above, this application includes the splitting of the current two accessways such that the existing hay barn (which is to be retained) is served by the main existing accessway into the site in the south western corner of the plot, whilst the new dwelling, Loose boxes, tractor shed and farm office will be accessed from an existing access which will be opened in the North western corner of the plot. A long drive will bend round through the field to the house from this point. A new hardstanding area will be created in front of the house of unspecified materials. A new garden will be created to the west and a field created to the north east.

## PLANNING HISTORY

The planning history indicates a poultry use on this site dating back to 1973 with the earlier use of the site as a piggery. Since this date, there have been various applications relating to the poultry use of the site, including:

S/1996/1202 Planning permission was refused for the provision of a mobile home for an agricultural worker in November 1996.

S/2000/2036 In January 2001, planning permission was granted for the erection of a replacement agricultural building (poultry unit) to replace earlier units lost to fire. *This permission has not been implemented and has now lapsed.*

S/2000/2037 At the same time, planning permission was also granted for the erection of a second agricultural building (poultry unit) to replace an earlier unit lost to fire. *This permission has not been implemented and has now lapsed.*

More recently, and of particular relevance to the current proposal, the planning history includes the following planning applications:

S/2003/0586 Planning permission was refused in June 2003 for alterations to and conversion of the former agricultural buildings to provide 11 B1/B8 industrial/storage units. This application was refused for the following reasons:

- "1. The proposed development, by virtue of its range of uses, scale and location represents a significant employment development which is likely to be served primarily by private motorised vehicles and therefore will increase the number and length of such trips, contrary to the aims to achieve sustainable patterns of development including influencing the rate of traffic growth and reducing the environmental impact of transport overall, as established by the Wiltshire Structure Plan Policy DP1, Replacement Salisbury District Local Plan Policy G1 and PPG13.*
- 2. In the absence of any Traffic Assessment the Local Planning Authority is not convinced that the resultant traffic arising from this development can be safely accommodated within existing road capacities, including the A.303, A.36 and B.3083 and therefore the scheme is considered to be contrary to the requirements of Policy G1 (iv) and C21 (ix) of the Adopted Salisbury District Local Plan, and policies G2 (ii) and C24 (ix) of the Replacement Salisbury District Local Plan.*
- 3. The County Class II road B3083, by reason of its restricted width, poor alignment and sub-standard junction with the Trunk Road A.36 at Stapleford is considered unsuited to serve as a means of access to the proposed development, contrary to the requirements of Policy G1 (iii) of the Adopted Salisbury District Local Plan and Policy G2 of the Replacement Salisbury District Local Plan.*
- 4. Vehicles resulting from the proposed development leaving the site access at a point where visibility from and of such vehicles is restricted, would be a source of danger to other road users to the detriment of highway safety, contrary to the requirements of Policy G1 (iii) of the Adopted Salisbury District Local Plan and Policy G2 of the Replacement Salisbury District Local Plan.*
- 5. The proposed development, by retaining two large and utilitarian structures, in addition to the introduction of vehicle parking areas and any ancillary outside storage and signage required for the normal operation of the resultant development will represent an alien and harmful form of development within the open countryside setting of the Special Landscape Area, contrary to the requirements of Policy C7 of the Adopted Salisbury District Local Plan and Policy C6 of the Replacement Salisbury District Local Plan".*

S/2005/2522 A planning application to redevelop part of the site of Wisma Farm through the demolition of the existing poultry sheds and the erection of two office buildings, a store building, a manage and associated parking provision was withdrawn in January 2006.

S/2006/2122 Demolish existing derelict poultry sheds and silos, steel framed barn and associated outbuildings, redevelop site by erection of replacement dwelling, stable block, lambing shed and stores, office building, storage building, construction of a ménage and associated access & landscape works. The application was refused for the following reasons -

1. *As a matter of principle, in the interests of the character and appearance of the countryside, the Local Planning Authority considers that the establishment of new employment sites in the countryside should be resisted. In that the proposal represents the development of a new employment site in the countryside, other than by the conversion or replacement of suitably located and constructed existing buildings, for which there is no overriding justification it would be unacceptable in principle and contrary to Policies E21, C1, C2 and C6 of the Adopted Salisbury District Local Plan and Government guidance in PPS7 "Sustainable Development in Rural Areas".*
2. *The proposed development, with particular regard to the employment use, by reason of its location within the open countryside is likely to encourage additional vehicle trips and create further dependence on the private car for travel to, and from the site, contrary to the principles of achieving a sustainable pattern of development. As such, the proposed development is contrary to Policy G1 of the Adopted Salisbury District Local Plan (June 2003), Policy DP1 and DP3 of the Adopted Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016 (April 2006) and the aims of PPS3 "Housing", PPS7 "Sustainable Development in Rural Areas" and PPG13 "Transport".*
3. *The proposed replacement dwelling would be significantly larger than the existing dwelling and as such would conflict with the principle of Policy H30 of the Adopted Salisbury District Local Plan (June 2003) that seeks to restrict the size of replacement dwellings so that they are not significantly larger than the dwelling that they replace in the interests of the character and appearance of the countryside. Furthermore, by reason of its greater scale, massing and height the replacement dwelling would be more prominent in the landscape than the existing dwelling to the detriment of the character and appearance of the countryside and high quality landscape of the Special Landscape Area. As such, the proposed development is contrary to Policies G1, C1, C2, C6 and H30 of the Adopted Salisbury District Local Plan (June 2003), Policy C9 of the Adopted Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016 (April 2006) and the advice contained in PPS7 "Sustainable Development in Rural Areas".*
4. *The proposed development, by reason of the excessive scale and massing of the stable block, office and storage buildings, together with the cumulative impact of the development as a whole, would appear as an intrusive form of development and lead to an undesirable encroachment into the countryside and the proliferation of non-agricultural buildings/structures, for which there is no overriding justification, in the countryside and Special Landscape Area. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policies G1, C1, C2, C6, H30, E21 and R1C of the Adopted Salisbury District Local Plan (June 2003), Policy C9 of the Adopted Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016 (April 2006) and the key aims of PPS7 "Sustainable Development in Rural Areas".*

The above application is currently under appeal

There is no planning history relating to the existing bungalow on the site.

## CONSULTATIONS

WCC Highways: No Highway objection is raised to the proposed new dwelling and new agricultural buildings subject to conditions. The proposed access for the new dwelling is at an improved position where visibility is much improved to the north (but obtainable through the adjacent field boundary fence) and visibility to the south is acceptable but partially obstructed by the beech trees. The beech trees form an obstruction to visibility at the existing main access point but I note that the existing hay barn only will gain access from this existing access and therefore the likely traffic at this access is much reduced.

Highways Agency: No objection and has confirmed that it does not propose to give a direction restricting the grant of planning permission.

WCC Archaeology: No objection, subject to the imposition of a condition requiring an archaeological watching brief takes place during the initial stages of construction.

Environment Agency: Raise no objections but strongly recommend that the development includes sustainable design and construction measures which comply with the code for sustainable homes. Also recommend that water efficiency measures are incorporated into the scheme.

Wessex Water: The site is not located within a Wessex Water sewered area. The developer has proposed to dispose of foul flows to existing mains. As there are no existing public foul sewers in the vicinity of the site it is advised that the developer investigate alternative methods for the satisfactory disposal of foul flows from the site (e.g. septic tank).

There is a water main in the vicinity of the proposal. It will be necessary for the developer to agree a point of connection onto the system for the satisfactory supply of water for the proposal. This can be agreed at the detail design stage.

Natural England: No objection. We advise that the mitigation proposals are assured through a planning condition, using all the recommendations contained within the survey for protected Wildlife Species undertaken by Country Contracts in September 2006.

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust: No objection although would recommend that the entire site is resurveyed as the report prepared by the applicants specialists is now over a year old.

Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre: In carrying out the planning screen, records for bats and barn owls were found at this site. Bats are fully protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the habitats Regulations. Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 9, paragraph 16, states that planning authorities should ensure that species which receive statutory protection under a range of legislative provisions should be protected from the adverse effect of development, by using planning conditions or obligations.

Environmental Health: No objections subject to a condition restricting the hours of construction.

## REPRESENTATIONS

Advertisement Yes - expired 15/11/07

Site Notice displayed	Yes - expired 15/11/07
Departure	Yes
Neighbour notification	Yes - expired 05/11/07
Third Party Response	Yes

Eight letters of representation have been received in response to the proposed development raising the following main issues -

My Wife and I live in the adjacent property on the eastern border. We heartily support this proposal, which will remove an eyesore and replace it with a property and surroundings more in keeping with the neighbourhood.

Consider the property is not in the open countryside as it is directly adjacent a row of other properties. None of the existing houses are built sympathetically to the open countryside. Consider the new dwelling will be adjacent the open countryside not in it.

Consider that the site should be an exception to the rule of not allowing dwellings that are significantly larger than the existing.

Consider that there is a demonstrable need for a better quality and size of dwelling than existing.

The proposed new dwelling will create a better visual impact.

Consider the chicken sheds are highly visible and priority should be given to their removal.

Neighbours have suffered from noise and smell pollution in the past from the chicken farm.

A house at Wisma farm would be in keeping with the existing pattern of development.

The site is at present a mess and this proposal would tidy it up and enhance the area.

Applicants Agents comments on the officer report -

To describe the application as seeking to "redevelop the whole site" is not accurate as in terms of the extent of proposed construction this is limited to a small part of the site.

It is clear in the report that there are 8 letters of support but equally should acknowledge there are no letters objecting.

Parish Council: No objections and support the proposal to redevelop the site of the old chicken farm at Wisma Farm. We note that the proposal shows a new entrance and ask for confirmation that the old entrance is to close because, in the Councils opinion, it is on a dangerous stretch of road with poor sight lines for traffic. It is noted that at paragraph 12, the applicant has ticked "yes" to having a public footpath or bridleway over the land-to the Council's knowledge no rights of way exist over this land.

## POLICY CONTEXT

The following policies are relevant to the current proposal:

Retained Local Plan policies: G1, G2, H30, CN21, CN22, C2, C6, C8, C12, TR11, TR14 and C20.

Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016 (Adopted April 2006): DP1, DP3, DP9, DP14, T5, C1, C9 and HE2.

Also of relevance to this application are PPS1 “Delivering Sustainable Development”, PPS7 “Sustainable Development in Rural Areas” PPG13 “Transport” and PPG16 Archaeology.

## MAIN ISSUES

1. Principle of development
2. Visual Impact of Development upon the Landscape/Design
3. Sustainable Patterns of Development
4. Impact upon Highway Network
5. Residential Amenity
6. Flood Risk
7. Drainage
8. Impact on Protected Species
9. Nature Conservation
10. Archaeological Issues
11. Provision of Recreation Facilities

## PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

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1. Principle of Development

The application site represents an agricultural site that lies outside of the settlement boundaries of Berwick St James and Winterbourne Stoke and forms part of the Special Landscape Area within the open countryside. The current application, proposes the redevelopment of the site for the erection of a replacement residential dwelling related agricultural use, farm offices and machinery storage. As such, this application represents a proposal that raises a number of complex policy issues.

Given the location of the site within the open countryside, the proposed development falls to be considered against the relevant countryside policies that represent an appropriate starting point for the assessment of this application. Within the open countryside, Government guidance set out in PPS7 “Sustainable Development in Rural Areas” makes it clear that new development should be strictly controlled and that there is a presumption against new development for which there is no demonstrable need. In this respect, PPS7 states at Paragraph 1 (iv) that, “*New building development in the open countryside away from existing settlements, or outside areas allocated for development in development plans, should be strictly controlled; the Government’s overall aim is to protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscape, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources and so it may be enjoyed by all*”. The guidance also identifies at paragraph 15 that “*Planning authorities should continue to ensure that the quality and character of the wider countryside is protected and, where possible, enhanced*”.

The retained countryside policies of the Salisbury Local Plan uphold the guidance set out in PPS7 and in particular that new development should maintain or enhance the environment. Policy C2 identifies that development in the countryside will be strictly limited in order to fulfil the objective of conserving the countryside and will not be permitted unless it would benefit the local economy and maintain or enhance the environment. Policy C6 that deals specifically with development proposals in the parts of the countryside designated as a Special Landscape Area is also of particular relevance. This policy requires that development within the Special Landscape Area must have particular regard to the high quality of the landscape and that the siting and scale of development must also be sympathetic with the landscape and of a high standard of design.

- A) Replacement Dwelling



The development proposes a replacement dwelling; Policy H30 of the Adopted Salisbury District Local Plan that specifically relates to the replacement of existing dwellings in the countryside is directly relevant to this aspect of the application. This policy is permissive of such development, but only where, amongst other criteria, *“the proposed replacement dwelling is not significantly larger and has no greater impact than the existing dwelling”*. The explanatory text to this policy provides further advice in relation to the reason for this policy and states, *“A replacement dwelling should not be significantly larger than the one being replaced in order to maintain the overall character of the countryside. The fact that a house on a particular site would be unobtrusive is not considered sufficient justification for a substantial increase in size, as the cumulative impact of proposals, if not carefully controlled, would lead to the long-term erosion of the character of the District’s countryside”*. This makes it clear that it is not just the site specific impact of a replacement dwelling that has to be considered, although this is of course of importance, but also the cumulative impact on the wider countryside of allowing significantly larger dwellings that would result in long-term harm to its character.

In this case, it is considered that the proposed replacement dwelling would be *“significantly larger”* than the existing dwelling. In terms of a comparison of the footprint of the proposed replacement dwelling with the existing dwelling, it is considered that the proposed footprint would be decreased from 165m<sup>2</sup> to 151m<sup>2</sup> – a decrease of about 9% that is well within the terms of the replacement dwelling that could be tolerated by this policy. A decrease in the ground floor space of 9% is therefore considered acceptable.

The replacement dwelling, however, is proposed to be two-storeys in height with the habitable accommodation provided on two separate floor levels whereas the existing dwelling is a single storey bungalow with the habitable accommodation restricted to the ground floor only. As such, in terms of floor space, it is considered that the replacement dwelling would represent a significant increase in comparison to the existing property. The applicants state that there would be an increase in floorspace from 197m<sup>2</sup> at present to 302m<sup>2</sup>. The correct existing floorspace is however 165m<sup>2</sup> excluding existing outbuildings and therefore the increase in floorspace would be 83% larger than existing.

In terms of the physical size of the existing and replacement dwellings, the proposed dwelling would be some 8.8m (the applicant considers it is 8.7M) high to the main ridge and 6.0m to the eaves level (in comparison to the ridge and eaves heights of the existing dwelling of 4.4m and 2.5m respectively), while the overall depth would be 12.5m (compared to 9.9m) and the width would be 12.5m (compared to 18.8m). As such, the replacement dwelling would result in an increase in the height and bulk and again it is considered that this clearly reflects that the replacement dwelling will be significantly larger than the existing dwelling. Furthermore, it is also clearly evident that as a result the volume of the replacement dwelling would be significantly greater than that of the existing dwelling.

In light of the assessment that the replacement dwelling would be significantly larger than the existing dwelling, it is considered that the proposed development will clearly be contrary to Policy H30. This requirement is a matter of principle and the policy identifies that even where a site is unobtrusive a significantly enlarged dwelling should be refused. As such, in the absence of any overriding justification for the proposed development there is also a principle policy objection to this aspect of the application.

#### b) Agricultural Block

As mentioned above, as a general rule, new development in the countryside should be strictly controlled and there is a general presumption against new development in the countryside for which there is no demonstrable justification in accordance with the advice in PPS7 and the

countryside policies of the Retained Local Plan Policies. The policy stance towards agricultural related activities, however, is more permissive. In this respect, paragraph 32 of PPS7 states, “*The government recognises the important and varied roles of agriculture, including in the maintenance and management of the countryside and most of our valued landscapes.*” However, such development should maintain the environmental quality and countryside character. This advice is also echoed in Policy C20 of the Retained Local Plan policies that also advises that development which is essential to meet the needs of agriculture, forestry or horticulture will be permitted in the countryside subject to certain criteria.

## 2. Visual Impact of Development upon the Landscape/Design

With regards to the visual impact of the proposed development, as mentioned above Government guidance states that new development in the open countryside away from existing settlements should be strictly controlled and that planning authorities should continue to ensure that the quality and character of the wider countryside is protected and, where possible, enhanced. In accordance with retained local policies, development proposals in the parts of the countryside designated as a Special Landscape Area must have regard to the high quality of the landscape and the siting and scale of development must be sympathetic with the landscape and of a high standard of design.

At present, the existing buildings are of a relatively low, single storey form and as such do not dominate any prominent or skyline location. Indeed, due to the relatively low lying position of the site, together with the topography of the surrounding landscape and existing tree cover, distant views of the site are limited. The existing poultry sheds by reason of their scale, reflective roof materials and the height of the grain silos, however, are more prominent features in the landscape when viewed from some more localised vantage points. In particular, there are clear views of the existing buildings when the site is approached from the A303 to the north as well as from the footpath that runs immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site. Nevertheless, while it is recognised that the design of the existing poultry sheds is functional and the appearance of the site as a poultry farm does not enhance the visual qualities of the landscape character of the Special Landscape Area, it must be borne in mind that the design, layout and materials of the existing poultry units are typical of agricultural development in general and are of a format that is expected to be found in rural locations.

In considering the visual impact of the proposed development, the office and storage buildings have been designed to replicate traditional vernacular agricultural buildings with timber clad elevations under a slate/clay tiled roof. Whilst it is recognised that these buildings would generally be of an acceptable design and would occupy a substantially reduced footprint in comparison to the existing poultry units, it is also evident that due to the steeply pitched roof form they would be of a much greater overall height. In this respect, the proposed office and storage buildings would have an overall ridge height of about 6.0 metres in comparison to the existing poultry sheds that are about only 3.5 metres in height. As such, it is considered that due to their overall ridge height and roof massing, the proposed office and storage buildings would be visually more prominent in the wider area.

With regards to the proposed replacement dwelling, in addition to the ‘in principle’ concerns outlined above, Policy H30 requires that the replacement dwelling “*has no greater impact than the existing dwelling*”. While it is recognised that the existing dwelling is of little or no architectural merit, due to its relatively modest scale and height, together with its siting towards the south eastern corner of the site, it is considered that the existing dwelling has little visual impact on the surrounding landscape. In contrast, the replacement dwelling has been designed as a more traditional farmhouse that reflects the local vernacular and in this respect will be two-storeys in height and finished in brick and flint/stone elevations with clay tiled hipped roof. However, due to the significant increases identified above, and in particular the fact that the proposed replacement dwelling will be two-storeys in height, it is considered that it will be of significantly greater bulk, scale and physical mass and as such would be significantly more prominent in the countryside

and the Special Landscape Area than the existing dwelling. In turn, it is also considered that to some extent this would have the effect of giving the site a more domestic appearance to the detriment of the character and appearance of the countryside.

Turning to the proposed agricultural block, it is considered that in general terms such buildings would normally be expected to be low profile buildings and restricted to a size that meets the required needs only. It is considered that the overall scale and massing of the proposed agricultural building would still be excessive, measuring approximately 16m x 12m in an L shape and 6 metres at its highest point. As such, it is considered that it would be visually intrusive within the Special Landscape Area.

The current proposal also includes an enlargement of the proposed residential curtilage to the replacement dwelling in comparison to that of the existing dwelling on the site. In this respect, the applicant's agent for the previous planning application advised that the existing residential curtilage extends to approximately 1.1 acres, while the area of residential curtilage associated with the proposed replacement dwelling would be approximately 1.4 acres. While it is recognised that this represents a fairly limited extension to the residential curtilage it is nevertheless considered that it still constitutes an encroachment into the countryside for which there is no demonstrable justification. Furthermore, the extent of the existing residential curtilage identified by the applicant's previous agent is questioned. In this respect, it was argued that an area of land to the east of the existing dwelling forms part of the existing residential curtilage but given the physical appearance of that area of land at the time of that application and the fact that it was fenced off from the domestic garden it has to be questioned whether this is the case. If it were indeed the case that it does not form part of the existing curtilage, then the proposed development would represent a further unjustified encroachment into the countryside.

Although it is the applicant's contention that the proposed development will enhance the visual appearance of the site by the removal of the existing poultry sheds, it must be borne in mind that the design, layout and materials of the existing poultry units are typical of agricultural development in general and are of a format that is reasonably expected to be found in rural locations. Indeed, the only reason that the site has been developed at all is due to an agricultural need. By contrast, it is considered that the current proposal will result in the undesirable proliferation of non-agricultural buildings in the countryside for which no overriding justification or need has been demonstrated, while the arrangement of the development would amount to an undesirable encroachment into the countryside. As such, the proposal would be contrary to the desirability to preserve the countryside for its own sake. It is further considered that the proposed development could also act as a precedent for similar inappropriate schemes, if permitted, particularly as the circumstances surrounding the application are clearly not exceptional. It should be noted that the applicant contends that other schemes already set a precedent. In fact, there is an argument to say that the applicant has a responsibility to keep the site in a clean and tidy condition and that once the existing buildings cease to be required for agricultural purposes, and subject to them not being worthy of retention, as is considered to be the case in this instance, they should be demolished and the land restored as open countryside (agricultural field).

### 3. Sustainable Patterns of Development

The previous application at this site identified that a key issue was the sustainability of the site and its location within the open countryside. As this application proposes one replacement dwelling with another and the erection of an additional agricultural block to be associated with that dwelling. It is not considered that this is likely to result in any significant further traffic being produced from this site and as such it is not considered that the sustainability of this site over any other needs to be considered further. Although it should be noted that potentially there could be a reduction in traffic to the site from the removal of the Poultry sheds.

#### 4. Impact upon Highway Network

The highways officer has raised no objection to this application and therefore it is not considered that this development will have any further significant detrimental effect on highway safety or the local Highway network and therefore complies with the retained policies.

#### 5. Residential Amenity

With regards to the issue of residential amenity, it is not considered that the proposed development would result in any material harm to the amenities of the surrounding residential properties.

The nearest residential property to the application site, that is most likely to be affected by the proposed development, is "Over the Hill" that is located immediately adjacent to the south. The proposed replacement dwelling, however, would be distanced from this neighbouring property by about 50-60 metres at its closest and although it is proposed that the replacement dwelling would be two-storeys in height, in contrast to the existing single storey bungalow on the site, it is considered that it would be sufficiently distanced so as not to cause any harm to neighbouring amenity.

Similarly, it is also considered that the proposed agricultural block, office and agricultural storage buildings that are even further distanced from this neighbouring property will not have any adverse affect upon the amenities of its occupants. As such, it is considered that there is no justification to refuse the application on the basis of the impact of this aspect of the proposal on the amenities of the neighbouring property.

#### 6. Flood Risk

According to the Environment Agency's indicative flood maps, the application site lies within Flood Zone 1 that is land outside of the flood plain (i.e. areas not shown as within Flood Zone 2 or 3 on the flood maps) where there is than 1 in 1000 year chance of flooding from rivers or the sea. Within Flood Zone 1, the primary flood risk from new development is that posed either to the site or other sites by increases in surface water runoff.

In support of the application, the applicant has submitted a flood risk assessment. This assessment identifies that at present impermeable hard surfacing covers approximately 50% of the site area. The proposed development will result in a substantial reduction of the area of impermeable hard surfacing and as a result a reduction in the volume of surface water runoff. As such, it is advised that the proposed development will have a positive effect on flood risk elsewhere. In addition the flood risk assessment states that as the site lies on rising land outside of the 1 in 100 year flood zone, and some distance form the boundary of this flood zone, and having regard to the significant reduction in surface water runoff resulting from the development there are no implications for flooding when taking potential future climate change into account.

The Environment Agency has advised that the submitted flood risk assessment is considered to be acceptable and on the basis of the submitted details there is no objection to the proposed development.

#### 7. Drainage

With regards to the issue of drainage, the application site is not located within a sewerred area for the disposal of foul or surface water drainage. Accordingly, it is proposed that the disposal of foul sewage will be a treatment plant that accords with the guidance contained in Circular 03/99 that advises that where connection to a public foul sewer is not feasible a sewage treatment plant

should be considered as the next preferred option of foul waste disposal. The Environment Agency has not raised an objection to the proposed development in respect of this issue.

## 8. Impact on Protected Species

With regards to the impact of the proposed development on protected species, a protected species survey was undertaken in September 2006 and a report of the findings has been submitted in support of this application. This report identifies that no bats or bat droppings were found in any of the buildings, although there was evidence of discarded butterfly wings in the most northerly poultry house indicating that it has been used as a feeding roost by bats. A number of potential day roost sites, however, were identified at the existing bungalow and the poultry sheds. The survey also identifies that there is anecdotal evidence that Barn Owls have used a nest box provided in the hay barn, while pellets, mutes and feathers from this species were also found in the barn and corroborates this anecdotal evidence. A similar indication of use by Little Owls was also found in the barn. In addition, the submitted report states that no indications of other protected species were found during the survey although the established hedgerow and tree line along the southern boundary and trees to the other boundaries all provide opportunities for birds to nest.

As mitigation, the submitted report recommends that the hay barn should be retained on site until other buildings have been constructed and suitable alternative roost sites have been made available to Barn and Little Owls. This proposal envisages the retention of the Hay Barn. In this respect, it is suggested that the provision of a Barn Owl loft is more likely to be successful than a nest box. It is also recommended that bat boxes and bird nesting boxes should be introduced on to the site to compensate for potential bat roosts that will be lost as a result of the development. In addition, it is also recommended that caution must be taken when all roofing materials are removed and that they must be checked for roosting bats. In the event that bats are found to be present, it is advised that works must stop and expert advice sought, while if birds are found to be nesting they must not be disturbed.

Natural England has confirmed that it has no objection to the proposed development.

## 9. Nature Conservation

The site lies within the vicinity of the River Till Site of Scientific Special Interest (SSSI), a part of the River Avon System Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The nature conservation importance of the river system arises from the range and diversity of riparian habitats and associated species, all of which are dependent upon the maintenance of high water quality and sympathetic habitat management. Any development within the vicinity of the river obviously carries a risk of damage to the river ecosystem through habitat loss and pollution both during and after construction, for example through accidental spillage or run-off carrying exposed soil or building materials into the river. In this instance, however, Natural England has advised that it has no objection to the proposed development. It is therefore advised, that, the development, either alone or in combination with other development proposals, would not be likely to have a significant effect on the important interest features of the River Avon SAC, or any of the features of special scientific interest of the River Till Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

## 10. Archaeological Issues

The application site is located within an Area of Special Archaeological Significance. The County Archaeological Officer has advised that features have been recorded from aerial photographs to the west of the site that are likely to be field systems while the medieval settlement of Winterbourne Stoke lies to the east. In light of the fact that part of the site has been terraced and disturbed by the construction of buildings, it is recommended that an archaeological watching

brief takes place during the initial stages of construction that would allow an archaeological contractor to identify and record any archaeological features that may be uncovered. This can be secured by condition.

#### 11. Provision of Recreation Facilities

As this is a replacement dwelling no R2 payment is required.

#### CONCLUSION

In assessing this application, it is evident that there are aspects of the proposed development that would be beneficial, such as the visual enhancements to the site from the removal of the existing utilitarian poultry sheds. Indeed, a letters of support for the proposed development from local residents and the Parish Council have to some extent supported these arguments.

The replacement dwelling would be significantly larger than the existing dwelling and by reason of the increased bulk, scale and mass it is considered that it would be significantly more prominent in the countryside and the Special Landscape Area than the existing dwelling contrary to the requirements of Policy H30. The applicant's agent was informed of this prior to the submission of the application and subsequently during the course of the application and was advised to withdraw this application. It is further considered that the proposed development, by reason of the excessive scale and massing of the office, storage and agricultural buildings, would be visually intrusive and therefore fails to respect the character and high quality landscape of the Special Landscape Area. As a result, the proposal would result in the undesirable proliferation of buildings of an excessive scale in the countryside for which no overriding justification or need has been demonstrated, contrary to the desirability to preserve the countryside for its own sake. In addition, the approval of the proposed development on this site would create a precedent for similar sporadic development of isolated agricultural sites in the countryside, contrary to the tenet of sustainable development.

#### RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE for the following reasons:

1. The proposed replacement dwelling would be significantly larger than the existing dwelling and as such would conflict with the principle of Policy H30 of the Adopted Salisbury District Local Plan (June 2003) that seeks to restrict the size of replacement dwellings so that they are not significantly larger than the dwelling that they replace in the interests of the character and appearance of the countryside. Furthermore, by reason of its greater scale, massing and height the replacement dwelling would be more prominent in the landscape than the existing dwelling to the detriment of the character and appearance of the countryside and high quality landscape of the Special Landscape Area. As such, the proposed development is contrary to Policies G1, C2, C6 and H30 of the Adopted Salisbury District Local Plan (June 2003), Policy C9 of the Adopted Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016 (April 2006) and the advice contained in PPS7 "Sustainable Development in Rural Areas".
2. The proposed development, by reason of the excessive scale and massing of the loose boxes, office and storage buildings, together with the cumulative impact of the development as a whole, would appear as an intrusive form of development and lead to an undesirable encroachment into the countryside and the proliferation of built development for which there is no agricultural or other justification in the countryside and special landscape Area. As such the proposal is contrary to Policies G1, C2, C6 and C20 of the adopted Salisbury District Local Plan (June 2003) Policy C9 of the Adopted Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016 (April 2006) and the key aims of PPS7 sustainable Development in Rural Areas".

**Further supporting information with regard to justification for proposed accommodation within the proposed replacement agricultural buildings.**

Application: Demolition of existing agricultural buildings, existing dwelling and outbuildings, construction of replacement dwelling and replacement agricultural buildings.

Applicants: Mr & Mrs W Grant

Address: Wisma Farm, Berwick St. James,  
Salisbury, Wiltshire SN9 5LP

Prepared by: Alex Oliver Associates Ltd.  
1-3 Patford Street, Calne, Wiltshire SN11 0EF

Date of report: 30th January 2008

Disclaimer

This report has been prepared in good faith from information provided by the applicant, and with reference to existing topographical survey by others.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report has been prepared in order to address the request for further information regarding the applicant's involvement in current and planned agricultural activity at Wisma Farm in support of planning application to Salisbury District Council ref: S/2007/2046.
- 1.2 Wisma Farm comprises of 2.2 hectares, the site currently containing two large poultry sheds measuring 15m x 80m with a combined area of approximately 2,450 square metres with grain silos standing at 9.12 metres high. Within their perimeter the sheds currently contain workshop, storage and washing facilities associated with the running and maintenance of intensive poultry farming. There is a hay and straw barn in the south western corner of the site. There is also currently a detached dwelling occupied by the applicants together with its associated outbuildings.
- 1.3 The application includes the proposal to demolish the existing poultry sheds and all associated concrete bases extending to 3,123 square metres and incorporate their area into a field of permanent pasture for the keeping of livestock.
- 1.4 The proposed replacement agricultural buildings consist of two separate types of accommodation, a shed containing 4 loose boxes each measuring 4m x 3.8m, and one of 4m x 7.5m, and accessed from beneath an overhanging roof supported on posts typical of this type of building. The total accommodation being 90 square metres within a roof area of 134 square metres. In addition a barn is proposed alongside but separated from the proposed loose boxes in order to store farm machinery and accommodate the farm office. It consists of 3 open fronted bays each 3.2m x 5.2m deep, a WC with washing facilities, and secure office, within a building measuring 96 square metres.



## **2 EXISTING ENTERPRISE**

### **Background**

- 2.1 The applicants are a farmer's son and daughter and have lived in the countryside all their lives. Family enterprises run elsewhere include large livestock farms (sheep) in the Chalke Valley, nr. Salisbury, and in Yorkshire.

### **Land**

- 2.2 The applicants own 2.2 hectares (5 acres) at Wisma Farm and have now completed an agreement to rent the adjoining 2.2 hectares (5 acre) field to the north of the Wisma Farm. Therefore the applicant will own or manages 4.4 hectares (10 acres) of contiguous land.

### **Livestock**

- 2.3 The applicants have owned a small Jacob sheep flock for the past two years which has increased each year as land and facilities have allowed. The flock currently consists of 10 ewes. The sheep flock is used for fat lamb and wool production. The wool is sold to a local weaver. The lamb is butchered and sold locally. Lambing takes place indoors in February and March and on average produces two lambs per ewe (20 per year).

### **Machinery**

- 2.4 The applicant keeps the following machinery and equipment, a tractor, stock trailer, topper, harrow, fertilizer spreader, electric fencing equipment and tools associated with the maintenance of farmland and stock.

### **3 FARM DEVELOPMENT**

- 3.1 The proposed creation of permanent pasture at Wisma Farm will allow a further increase in the size of the current flock and it is the intention of the applicant to increase the flock to 30 – 40 head over the next 2 – 3 years.
- 3.2 It is the intention of the applicant to increase the acreage of land by renting as and when it becomes available.
- 3.3 As the existing agricultural buildings are not appropriate for the nature of the intended agricultural use of the land, i.e. the grazing of livestock, the application seeks approval for replacement agricultural buildings the design and layout of which are to be viewed within the context of the overall redevelopment of the site.

## 4. BUILDINGS

### Proposed Machine Store & Farm Office

- 4.1 The proposed building is required to replace the existing workshop, office and washing facilities within the existing poultry sheds.

The proposed accommodation consists of:

- ◆ three open bays to accommodate and protect from weather and to keep out of sight the applicants machinery listed in section 2.4.
- ◆ a WC with washing facilities required to be kept separate from the dwelling for the purposes of hygiene and infection control, and hot water for medical care for day and night lambing.
- ◆ a farm office of 4.2m x 5.2m for the secure fridge storage of animal medicines, and secure storage of vermin control poison, wet & dry changing area, storage and desk-based farm-related administration, i.e. a desk, telephone, filing.

### Proposed Loose Boxes

- 4.2 The proposed building is required to replace the existing facilities within the existing poultry sheds which have been utilised for the last two years.

The proposed accommodation consists of:

- ◆ 4 smaller loose boxes for lambing (during lambing up to 10 ewes will be in lamb), stock handling, isolation, medical care,
- ◆ a slightly larger corner loose box for the and storage of equipment, straw flooring material, bagged feed, bagged additives, and wool prior to collection,
- ◆ a roofed overhang providing shelter from inclement weather and protection to animals when the upper half of doors are open for ventilation.