CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/06387
Application Type:	Wiltshire Council R3
Site Inspection:	23/08/23
Consultation ends:	31 August 2023
Case officer:	Ruaridh O'Donoghue

Site Address:	Melbourne House, Melbourne Place, Devizes, SN10 2AB
Proposal:	Change of use from resource centre for children and families to residential.
Recommendation:	Approve with Conditions

Site Description and Proposal

The application concerns Melbourne House off The Nursery Road in Devizes, Wiltshire.

Melbourne House has a varied history with regard to planning uses, with the last approved use being a resource centre for children and families. Before that, it was a hotel. It is a grade II listed building with the listing description noting the following:

"Set well back from street, the main front facing west. Access by a drive adjacent to Melbourne Terrace gv. Circa 1840. 3 storeys ashlar on projecting plinth. 1st and 2nd floor block sill courses. Hipped slate roof with overhanging eaves. In the centre of ridge a small octagonal stair light, on lead base, with 2 light casements. Ashlar chimney stacks at ridge ends with moulded stone capping. 3 windows, square on 2nd floor, recessed sashes, later glazing bars. 2 tripartite sash windows on ground floor, no glazing bars, block sills. Central ashlar porch, semi-circular arched entrance with keystone, flanked by thin Doric pilasters on pedestals, cornice and blocking course with moulded coping. Round headed side windows with marginal glazing. Recessed door of 1 light with marginal glazing and round headed centre pane and 2 flush panels below. Semi-circular fanlight. Stone architrave surround. Along sides of house single storey extensions, slightly recessed from front. Half hipped slate roofs with moulded eaves cornice. Round headed window to front and 2 windows to side."

The site is located within the Limits of Development of Devizes. The site backs on to the Kennet and Avon Canal which is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset.

The application proposes a change of use from a resource centre for children and families to C3 (residential). Other than the change of use of the building no further works are required. As such, no counterpart listed building consent application is required.

Relevant Policies

Wiltshire Core Strategy:

- CP 1 – Settlement Strategy

- CP 2 – Delivery Strategy
- CP 12 – Devizes Community Area
- CP 57 – Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
- CP 58 – Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment
- CP 61 – Transport and new development
- CP 64 – Demand Management
- CP 67 – Flood Risk

Devizes Neighbourhood Plan

Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 - Car Parking Strategy – Appendix C

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Sections 66 and 72 of the The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Consultation Responses:

Devizes Town Council

No objections

Wiltshire Council Conservation Officer

Objection as there is a totally inadequate level of information for the change of use. No heritage statement has been supplied and no drawings or elevations provided to show the changes proposed to convert it back into a residential property.

Representations:

The Trust for Devizes have commented on the application offering their support for the restoration of the use for which this listed building was designed.

Assessment:

Principle of Development and Heritage Impact

The application involves the change of use of a building within the limits of development of Devizes to residential. Devizes is a market town suitable for accommodating a significant amount of residential development within its Limits as set out by Core Policies 1 and 2 of the WCS. There are no issues with the principle of changing this building from a children's resource and family centre to residential use as it is in line with WCS policy. Presumably at one point, it was a residential dwelling in any event and the site is surrounded by other residential properties. Furthermore, although just one dwelling, it will still make a contribution towards the Council's housing land supply which is currently under the 5 year requirement level.

Whilst noting the Conservation Officers' concerns regarding lack of detail, the application is not proposing any works to the listed building. As such, there are no plan or elevation drawings to show. No Heritage Assessment has been submitted but again, no changes are proposed to the building under this application. The Conservation Officer states that the principle may be acceptable as this was the original use of the building and therefore, it seems realistic to assume a sensitive conversion back to residential use could be achieved. To this end, it is considered that

an informative attached to the permission noting that listed building consent would be required for any works to the building. Depending upon the level of work proposed, planning permission may also be required. However, it can be concluded that this change of use application, with no works proposed to the building, will not have a harmful impact on its character or setting.

Design and Visual Impact

The purpose of the application is to secure a change of use to the building only. No building works or other changes to the building are proposed as part of this application. As such, there are no further issues to consider with respect to design and visual impact. Such matters would be considered if any further work is proposed to the building that requires planning permission.

Neighbour Amenity

A residential use will be compatible with the surrounding area which is also residential. Furthermore, this was the building's original purpose. No issues are raised here.

Highways Impact

The site is considered to have sufficient space to accommodate the parking to minimum residential parking standards. Former uses of the site include a hotel before it was a Children's Resource Centre. The current and previous uses of the site are considered to have generated more vehicle movements than a residential use would. As such, it is not considered that the residential use would have a severe impact on the surrounding highway network based on the historic and current use of the site. .

Conclusion

The change of use is considered acceptable in principle with no conflict identified with any relevant policies of the development plan. As such, it is recommended that the application be approved, subject to any conditions as detailed below.

Conditions: (2)

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

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

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

Drg Ref: Location Plan 1:1250@A4

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

Informatives: (1)

3 The applicant is reminded of the potential need to obtain listed building consent and/or planning permission for any works in addition to the change of use granted under this application.