

APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION AND LISTED BUILDING CONSENT DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2025/07616 and PL/2025/08745
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent
SITE ADDRESS:	Flat 1 & 2, Springfield House, Church Lane, Box, Corsham, SN13 8NW
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	To combine Flat 1 & Flat 2, by providing an accessible doorway in the existing internal partition wall, currently separating the two flats. Additionally, 'block off' existing current entrance doorway into Flat 2, using materials and methods of traditional format to match the fabric of the listed building.
RECOMMENDATION:	That Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent be GRANTED

PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks planning permission for amalgamating two ground floor flats into one dwelling.

The development and works are summarised below:

- Amalgamate two flats into one ground floor dwelling (flat).
- Create an internal opening to connect 'Flat One' and 'Flat Two'.
- Remove a modern privacy screen wall.
- 'Block up' existing entrance door (Flat Two) to create one entrance door to the one dwelling (flat).

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The subject property is a Grade II listed dwelling which has been converted into 8 separate flats and is wholly located within the Box Conservation Area. The front of the building is clearly visible from Church Lane and the upper portion of the building and roof to the rear is partially visible from the highway when travelling along Bath Road (A365). Springfield House's significance is related to its historic fabric and its form, layout and architectural expression/detailing of high-quality materials which provide aesthetic and architectural interest and group value to the wider area.

The site is subject to the following relevant planning designations and constraints:

- Springfield House (Flats no.1 - 8) are Grade II Listed Heritage Assets
- The application site is located within the Box Conservation Area

- The application site is located within the Cotswolds National Landscape (Formerly Cotswolds AONB)
- The application site is wholly contained within the Green Belt
- The application is also in an ecologically and archaeologically sensitive area

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
N/98/01334/LBC - Listed building consent Decision - Approve Date: 4/9/1998 – EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS TO INFILLPANELS BETWEEN SPRINGFIELD HOUSE AND EXTERNAL STAIRCASE TO PROTECT COMMUNAL LANDINGS EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS/STAIRCASE
N/93/01822/LBC - Listed building consent Decision - Approved Date: 25/11/1993 – ENCLOSURE OF SPACE BESIDE BOILER ROOM TO PROVIDE LAUNDRY FACILITY
N/91/00940/LBC - Listed building consent Decision - Approved Date: 12/7/1991 – DEMOLITION OF EXISTING STAIR- TOWER AND CONSTRUCTION OF NEW STAIRTOWER/ALTERATIONS TO BALCONY ACCESS
N/91/00941/DP3 - Wiltshire Council R3 Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 26/7/1991 – DEMOLITION OF EXISTING STAIRTOWER AND CONSTRUCTION OF NEW STAIRTOWER/ALTERATIONS TO BALCONY ACCESS
N/89/02937/LBC - Listed building consent Decision - Approved Date: 12/2/1990 – ALTERATIONS TO LISTED BUILDINGDEMOLISH STAIRCASE & REPLACE WITHIN ENCLOSED STRUCTURE AND ALTERATIONS & IMPROVEMENTS
N/89/03007/DP3 - Wiltshire Council R3 Decision - Approved Date: 12/2/1990 – Deemed Perm Reg 4- Replacement Staircase Within an Enclosed Structure Of Natural Stone
PL/2021/09342 - Listed building consent Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 2/3/2022 – Removal of internal stud corridor wall to create more spacious and light living room. Creation of small entry porch.
PL/2025/02735 - Listed building consent (Alt/Ext) Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 22/5/2025 – To remove an internal stud partition wall in kitchen. To make an open planned kitchen and living space allowing more light into the kitchen and living room.

RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Wiltshire Core Strategy:

- Core Policy 1 Settlement Strategy
- Core Policy 2 Delivery Strategy
- Core Policy 11 Spatial Strategy: Corsham 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

Wiltshire Design Guide: Appendix D – Design Guidance for Householder extensions

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The Planning Practice Guidance

National Design Guide

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990

Countryside Right of Way Act 2000

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Box Parish Council: No comments received at the time of writing.

Wiltshire Council Conservation Officer North: No Objection.

‘Whilst the submitted plans are not of the quality that one would normally associate with proposed changes to a Grade II listed structure, they do illustrate the impact of the proposed changes on the significance of the listed building.

The application follows detailed pre-application discussion, and therefore I am content the applicant has explored the impacts of the proposed works fully.

Given the proposed internal changes will only impact on modern fabric I conclude these works will not harm the architectural or historic values of the building.

In reference to the proposed external changes these are limited to the blocking up of one modern doorway, such a change is considered to have a neutral impact on the significance of the building as the works are considered to be fully reversible and only affect a modern opening in the building's facade associated with its previous conversion to flats in the 20th Century.’

Wiltshire Council Highways Engineer: Comment.

‘No objection. The applicant should be minded to perform all construction with the smallest vehicle capable given the restrictions of Church Lane, an adopted unclassified road.’

REPRESENTATIONS

Four letters of support in of the application were received.

ASSESSMENT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

In accordance with this statutory requirement, this application has been assessed against the relevant policies of the Development Plan, including the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and, where applicable, any made Neighbourhood Plans.

Principle of Development

Wiltshire Core Strategy Policies CP1 (Settlement Strategy) and CP2 (Delivery Strategy) set out the spatial strategy for sustainable development across Wiltshire. These policies direct new development to the most sustainable locations, primarily within the limits of development of market towns, local service centres, and large villages. Proposals outside these limits are generally only supported in exceptional circumstances. Box is designated as a Large Village within the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS).

The application site is an existing one bedroomed ground floor flat, located within a detached period building which has been converted into 8 individual flats and situated on a no-through lane leading to the Church. The application was subject to a preapplication enquiry which was broadly supportive. The application seeks permission for the amalgamation of Flat One and Flat Two into one ground floor dwelling (flat).

Whilst internal works associated with the conversion of two flats into a single dwelling would not generally constitute development, it is possible that the amalgamation could be considered a material change of use requiring planning permission if development would result in a material effect on reducing the number of dwellings in the housing stock which is a matter of public interest.

There is no explicit WCS or NDP policies which restrict the amalgamation of two flats into one dwelling and review of recent Wiltshire Council monitoring reports do not indicate that development of that nature has resulted in significant losses to the housing land supply in the last year.

Given the above, notwithstanding that the Council have accepted that the requisite housing land supply for the County cannot be demonstrated, and notwithstanding that the scheme will result in the loss of one residential unit, on this occasion the resulting loss from the amalgamation is not considered likely to have a material impact on the housing stock available.

At the time of writing, the amalgamation of two flats to one dwelling in this location is de minimis in the context of the dwellings in Wiltshire and there is no objection to the principle of the scheme.

Green Belt

There is no relevant local development plan policy on Green Belt and as such the NPPF, Section 13 is the only policy consideration on this matter. This sets out a negative planning approach and is one of the most restrictive planning policies in England. It sets out that development, except for specific exclusions at paragraphs 154 and 155 of the NPPF, is inappropriate. It explains that development should not harm the defining characteristic of the Green Belt which is its openness.

Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The NPPF confirms that 'very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

National policies indicate, amongst other things, that applications for residential alterations in such locations should be strictly controlled and not be disproportionate to the host building. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open with key purpose being to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

Whilst strictly there is no general exemption for merging two flats into one within the Green Belt; there are circumstances where this type of change could be considered as inappropriate and could be harmful to the Green Belt.

On this occasion, however, from a visual assessment of the information submitted, the proposed changes could be supported via the exemptions outline in paragraph 154. Paragraph 154 to the NPPF confirms that new development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless specified in a series of exceptions. Exception (c) requires that an extension or alteration of a building will not be inappropriate provided that it does not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building. Use of the term "original building" is defined within annexe 2 to the NPPF as:

'Original building: A building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.'

The proposal is not seeking to extend the building beyond the existing floor plans of both flats. The proposal seeks to make relatively minor alterations to amalgamate two flats into one enlarged dwelling, which is closer to the original floor plan of the dwelling. Accordingly, the proposals are not inappropriate development and would not harm the character or openness of the Green Belt.

Landscape Impact

The site is wholly contained within the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly Cotswolds AONB). Core Policy 51 of the WCS and Policy CE1 the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030 seek to ensure that the landscape character, scenic quality and

geological features of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) are conserved, and where possible enhanced.

As a result of the proposal's location within the CNL, due consideration is given to the potential impact the proposal will have upon the openness of the National Landscape.

The proposal is seeking to conjoin two adjacent flats into one dwelling. The proposal is not extending the footprint beyond the existing form, and the rear of the flat block is screened to a degree by the topography of the land and road network. The minor changes to the buildings existing envelope (blocking up of one entrance door) is de-minimis in a wider landscape context. As a result, any visual impact upon the wider landscape is likely to be minimal, there is considered to be no harm to the openness of the CNL at this stage.

Design and Impact on Heritage Assets

With regard to the historic environment the main statutory tests are set out within the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the Council to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of designated Conservation Areas. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990 requires 'special regard' to be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting.

The NPPF outlines government policy, including its policy in respect of the historic environment. Section 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development. The NPPF requires a balanced approach with any harm which would be caused being weighed against the potential public benefits which might be achieved.

The Council's Core Strategy Policy CP58 'Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment' requires that "designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance." Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy Policy CP57 states 'development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality.' Core Policy 57 - Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping of the Wiltshire Core Strategy also seeks to ensure that all new development is of high design quality, reflecting local context, character, and distinctiveness.

The subject property is a Grade II listed dwelling which has been converted into 8 separate flats and is wholly located within the Box Conservation Area, such that impact to the listed building, its listed neighbours and Conservation Area must be assessed. The front of the building is clearly visible from Church Lane and the upper portion of the building and roof to the rear is partially visible from the highway when travelling along Bath Road (A365). Springfield House's significance is related to its historic fabric and its form, layout and architectural expression/detailing of high-quality materials which provide aesthetic and architectural interest and group value, contributing to the character of the Conservation Area.

Proposed works are restricted to the rear elevation at ground floor level and internal changes to amalgamate the two flats. The conservation officer has been consulted and notes that whilst the submitted plans are not of the quality that one would normally associate with proposed changes to a Grade II listed structure, they do illustrate the impact of the proposed changes on the significance of the listed building clearly enough to understand and appropriately assess the proposals. The conservation officer has highlighted that the proposed internal changes of the removal of a small portion of wall and creating the new opening will only impact on modern fabric and concludes that these works will not harm the architectural or historic values of the building.

In reference to the proposed external changes these are limited to the blocking up of one modern doorway; such a change is considered to have a neutral impact on the significance of the building as the works are considered to be fully reversible and only affect a modern opening in the building's façade. Materials are of a traditional format to match the fabric of the listed building in all aspects; materials include limestone brick and mortar finish externally and a plastered and painted finish internally.

Paying special regard to the desirability of preserving the nearby heritage assets and any features of special historic or architectural interest they possess, the proposed extensions and alterations are considered acceptable in their impacts upon the identified heritage asset.

Box Conservation Area

The subject property is a Grade II Listed dwelling which is wholly located within the Box Conservation Area, such that impact to the listed building, its listed neighbours and Conservation Area must be assessed. The front of the building is clearly visible from the lane and the upper portion of the building and roof to the rear is partially visible from the highway when travelling along the lane. Springfield Houses significance is related to its historic fabric and its form, layout and architectural expression/detailing of high-quality materials which provide aesthetic and architectural interest and group value, contributing to the character of the Conservation Area.

Proposed works are very modest and would benefit from partial screening on the southern (rear) elevation, where works are to the ground floor portion of the building and the topography of the road network provide visual containment, reducing the lower portion of the rear elevation's prominence within the wider setting. This limited visibility ensures that public views of the lower portion of Springfield House, where currently flat One and Flat Two are entered are predominantly hidden from public view. Views of Springfield House from the Conservation Area are principally confined to the front, eastern and western elevations and the upper portion of the southern (rear), where no changes are proposed. It is considered that the proposed development to the rear of the dwelling would not compromise any important views or vistas from within or to the conservation area and where views could be potentially glimpsed, the development would be read against existing residential context and associated built form, resulting in a neutral impact.

The proposal, by virtue of its scale, design, and use of materials, is considered to preserve the Conservation Area. It would not result in harm to the significance of any heritage assets, and no objections have been raised by the Conservation Officer.

The development is therefore considered to comply with Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

Residential Amenity

Policy CP57 also includes a requirement that development should ensure a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupants (point vii). This includes safeguarding privacy, outlook, natural light, and protection from noise, disturbance, and overbearing effects.

In this case, the proposal seeks permission for the amalgamation of Flat One and Flat Two into a single residential unit. The submitted plans indicate that the two ground-floor flats would be physically connected through the formation of an internal doorway, which would link the existing living rooms/bedrooms of the respective properties.

Based on the plans provided, the development would remain within the same residential use class and would result in the creation of one dwelling rather than two separate units. The domestic character of the property would therefore be retained, and the proposed works are unlikely to give rise to any unacceptable impacts in terms of noise, disturbance, or other amenity considerations to immediate neighbours, especially those located to the floor above. Four letters of support have been received. Consequently, the de-conversion from two flats to a single dwelling is not anticipated to unacceptably alter the nature of the site or its relationship with the surrounding properties.

The proposal therefore accords with Core Policy 57 point vii in respect of safeguarding residential amenity and Appendix D of the Wiltshire Design Guide.

Highway Safety and Parking

Policies CP60 to CP64 set the transport and accessibility framework for development in Wiltshire. Proposals must provide safe and suitable access for all users and should not have a severe impact on the transport network. Adequate parking, turning space, cycle storage, and accessibility for waste collection should be incorporated in line with Wiltshire's adopted car parking strategy.

The proposal is seeking to decrease the bedroom quantum of the dwelling/s from two to one but is not seeking to alter the existing car parking arrangements. The highways engineer has been consulted and provides no objection. The applicant should note the engineers' comments with regards to performing all construction deliveries and works with the smallest vehicle capable given the restrictions of Church Lane, an adopted unclassified road.

The proposed development would not result in any adverse impact on highway safety. Adequate parking provision is provided in accordance with Wiltshire's adopted parking standards and access arrangements are unchanged. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Core Policies 57 (xiv), 61 and 64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the NPPF, and the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, including through ensuring that development avoids harm to protected species and habitats. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in Paragraphs 193, requires that development minimises impacts on and provides net gains for biodiversity, including ensuring mitigation is secured where harm cannot be avoided.

The application is seeking minor internal and external alterations to an existing dwelling. The proposal does not include works to roost networks, community corridors, trees or any foraging areas and so would not be likely to impact on commuting corridors for bat species. On balance it is considered that the risk to bat species associated with the SAC and other bat species such as Pipistrelles are very low.

As the proposal relates solely to minor works to an existing dwelling, the proposal appears to fall within the exemptions set out in the Biodiversity Net Gain regulations and therefore BNG does not seem to apply in this instance. The onus remains on the applicant to ensure that the development and works are carried out in accordance with wildlife legislation and that no harm occurs to protected species during construction.

As such, the development complies with Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

Archaeology

Planning records indicate that the site is in an archaeologically sensitive location. The proposal would not break new ground or extend the floor plan beyond the existing built floor plans of flat one and flat two. Therefore, at this stage, the archaeologist has not been consulted and the application would not require the submission of an appropriate archaeological assessment.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its design, scale, and relationship with the surrounding area. It would not result in any unacceptable harm to the character of the locality, the amenities of neighbouring occupiers, or the interests of the Green Belt, design, highway safety, heritage, national landscape, ecology or archaeological deposits.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the Wiltshire Local Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework. As such, the application is recommended for approval, subject to the conditions set out below.

RECOMMENDATION: That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

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:

Planning Statement

Received: 22.09.25

Design, Access and Heritage Statement
Location and Site Plan

Received: 15.10.25

Existing and Proposed Elevations
Existing and Proposed Floor Plans

Received: 21.10.25

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

- 3 The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match in material, colour and texture those used in the existing building.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area.

RECOMMENDATION: That Listed Building Consent be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

1. The works for which Listed Building Consent is hereby granted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings

and Conservation Areas) 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:

Planning Statement

Received: 22.09.25

Design, Access and Heritage Statement
Location and Site Plan

Received: 15.10.25

Existing and Proposed Elevations
Existing and Proposed Floor Plans

Received: 21.10.25

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

- 3 The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match in material, colour and texture those used in the existing building.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area.

- 4 The natural stonework to be used externally on the proposed development shall match that of the existing building in terms of type, colour, size, dressing and bedding of stone, coursing, type of pointing and mortar mix.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area.