



PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Lawn Cottage, Zeals, Warminster, BA12 6NH

08 January 2026

1. Introduction

This statement supports a householder planning application for the conversion of the original garage at Lawn Cottage into a single-storey residential annexe. The annexe will provide ancillary accommodation for the applicant's parents, ensuring family support while maintaining the integrity of the main dwelling.

Current and emerging planning policy gives significant weight to sustainable, small scale, low impact accommodation, and this proposal aligns strongly with that direction.

2. The Site

'Lawn Cottage' is located just southeast of Zeals Green on a lane foreshortened by the construction of the A303. This is one of only a few properties served by this road in a rural location characterised by well spaced dwellings of varying design and style. The house itself was built circa 1968, extended circa 2011. The garage was also extended circa 2016 with a wing containing a 4-car garage extension.

3. Planning History

Application Number S/2011/87/FULL (Full Application)

Description: 2 storey extension, first floor extensions, dormer windows, balcony and porch

Status: Application permitted with conditions 17/03/2011

Implemented

Application Number 14/06945/FULL (Full Application)

Description: Extension to existing garage

Status: Application permitted with conditions 16/09/2014

Completed: February 2017

4. Biodiversity mitigation

Using the Wiltshire Planning Explorer

The site does not lie in:

- An impact zone for the bat species
- An Environment agency flood zone 2 or 3
- A river catchment area with mitigation strategies

On the basis of the above, no ecological information has been supplied.

5. Description of Proposed Development

The proposal involves converting the original garage into a single-storey residential annexe to accommodate the parents of Mrs Hare, who will be part of the household. The annexe will include:

- Bedroom/living space
- Kitchen and bathroom facilities
- New windows roof-lights and doors for light and access

There are minimal changes proposed to the elevations and no alterations to the east elevation facing Orchard Cottage whatsoever.

The lane adjoining the north boundary is at a lower level and separated by a substantial hedge. This forms a very effective screen between the lane and the North elevation of the existing building to be converted, such that only the roofline is visible above the hedge viewing from the north.

The annexe will be occupied solely by relatives, with no intention of independent sale, rental, or commercial use. It will remain ancillary to the main dwelling, sharing services and access.

6. Planning Policy Context & Compliance

Wiltshire Local Plan – Saved Policies

- G1 & G2: The proposal supports sustainable development and respects the character and amenity of the area. Internal upgrades will improve thermal performance without altering the external appearance. It does not introduce harmful impacts on neighbouring properties or infrastructure.
- D3: The design of exterior alterations will be sympathetic to the existing structure, using matching materials and maintaining visual harmony.
- H16: The proposal does not constitute a new dwelling in the countryside. The annexe remains part of the residential unit and is intended for family use only.
- CN8: Although the site adjoins a conservation area to the north, it is not near any listed buildings; nonetheless, the proposal will preserve the character of the area.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- Supports development that meets the needs of families and promotes efficient use of land within residential curtilages, where housing should provide social connection and enable intergenerational proximity, supporting family cohesion and care arrangements.
- Paragraphs 126–136 encourage good design and integration with local character.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

- Clarifies that annexes may be acceptable where they are clearly ancillary and do not form a separate planning unit.

7. Further Assessment Against Key Planning Themes

a. Sustainable Development

Recent national consultations emphasise achieving sustainable development and improving energy performance in existing buildings. [gov.uk]

This proposal contributes by:

- re-using an existing structure rather than constructing a new dwelling (lower embodied carbon),
- upgrading thermal performance internally with little external change,
- enabling low-impact housing for family members, reducing reliance on separate accommodation elsewhere.

b. Design Quality and Local Character

The revised 2024 NPPF requires high-quality design with sensitivity to local character, including materials, scale, and form. [nalc.gov.uk]

The scheme fully complies because:

- the external appearance remains largely identical,
- wall cladding and roof materials are retained,
- massing and silhouette remain unchanged,
- the proposal maintains full compatibility with the existing residential group.

This approach fits directly with the strong emerging policy emphasis on well-designed but unobtrusive development.

c. Landscape and Conservation Setting

The 2025 proposed NPPF reforms emphasise landscape protection and effective land use near environmentally or heritage sensitive areas. [gov.uk]

The development avoids any visual impact on the conservation area due to:

- virtually no alterations to external elevations,
- no expansion toward the conservation boundary,
- mature screening already in place,
- the annexe being entirely contained within an existing built form.

This satisfies the strengthened national emphasis on preserving valued landscapes.

d. Meeting Local Housing Needs

The revised NPPF (Dec 2024) reintroduces mandatory housing targets for local authorities and places a strong responsibility on councils to accommodate a full range of housing needs. [nalc.gov.uk]

This proposal supports those objectives by:

- providing a modest, sustainable addition to local housing supply,
- delivering accommodation for dependent family members without requiring new land release,
- enabling multi-generational living consistent with demographic pressures.

e. Healthy Communities and Social Sustainability

Supporting dependent relatives contributes to community wellbeing, in line with consultation guidance promoting healthy communities and social infrastructure. [assets.pub...ice.gov.uk]

By allowing elderly or vulnerable relatives to live close to family support, the annexe helps:

- reduce strain on local services,
- promote wellbeing and independence,
- support policy aims around ageing-in-place.

8. Efficient use of land within the residential curtilage

Although the scheme to extend the garage (14/06945/FULL) resulted in a new wing housing a 4-car garage, the original garage – left with no main openings and roughly the size of 2 double garages, has

lost its original use.

Although the current owners have employed this space as a workshop and store, the applicants'/new owners have no such need, and the building will become largely redundant.

The proposed conversion therefore represents an ideal opportunity to utilising this building fully. It also negates the need for additional building footprint. Combined, these factors provide for a development that meets the needs of families and promotes efficient use of land within the curtilage in line with NPPF guidance.

Functional and Physical Relationship

Although the annexe is physically detached from the main dwelling, it remains functionally linked:

- Shared access and services
- The adjacent garage block and forecourt will be a common area of use and social interaction.
- No separate postal address or council tax
- Occupation restricted to family members
- No subdivision of the plot or curtilage

These factors support the classification of the annexe as ancillary accommodation, not a separate dwelling.

To consider linking any proposed annex to the house would likely involve closing the gap between the house and garage. This would not be an acceptable design solution due to the difference in design styles that should be maintained as separate and contained entities.

9. Design and Amenity

The proposed alterations are modest and designed to maintain the visual integrity of the existing building and the building complex generally. The annexe will not result in increased traffic, overlooking, or noise. The building's location ensures privacy and avoids impact on neighbouring properties.

10. Drainage and Services

The annexe will connect to existing drainage and utility networks serving Lawn Cottage, avoiding the need for separate infrastructure.

The drainage system was the subject of a recent survey and report by Mr A C Hooper BSc Civil Eng MTM Environmental & Civils Ltd. MTM advised that.... 'the septic tank is located in the rear garden and is a modern Marsh Industries shallow style septic tank system with an outlet line to a soakaway/drainage field, the location of the soakaway/drainage field is in the rear garden..... We would advise that the system meets all current compliant regulations, and binding rules and as it is a Marsh Industries unit will have BS EN 12566-1 certification'

11. Impact Assessment

- Visual Impact: Minimal, as the building retains its original form and materials.
- Landscape and Conservation: No harm to the adjacent conservation area or Special Landscape Area; the proposal preserves local character.
- Residential Amenity: No adverse impact on neighbouring properties due to unchanged footprint and orientation.

12. Access and Parking

Existing arrangements remain more than adequate for the main dwelling and annexe. No additional

hardstanding or access changes are proposed.

13. Design & Access Statement

- Use: The annexe will provide ancillary accommodation for family members, maintaining a functional link to the main dwelling.
- Amount: No increase in footprint or building profile; internal reconfiguration only.
- Layout: Internal layout designed for accessibility and comfort, with living, sleeping, and sanitary facilities.
- Scale: Single-storey, consistent with existing garage structure.
- Appearance: No change except for fenestration changes sympathetic to host building.
- Access: Existing vehicular and pedestrian access retained; no changes to site circulation.

14. Conclusion

The proposed annexe conversion is a low-impact, family-oriented sustainable conversion that aligns exceptionally well with both the current 2024 NPPF and the direction of travel in the 2025 proposed reforms. It supports multi-generational family cohesion and policy aims around ageing-in-place whilst making efficient use of the existing built form. Despite its physical separation, the annexe remains functionally and legally part of the main dwelling and does not constitute a new residential unit.

Planning permission is therefore respectfully sought for this development.