

APPLICATION FOR HOUSEHOLDER PLANNING PERMISSION DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2025/09381
APPLICATION TYPE:	Householder planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	The Old Post Office, The Street, Alderton, Chippenham , SN14 6NL
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Alterations to garage roof. Addition of dormer windows
RECOMMENDATION:	That Planning Permission be REFUSED

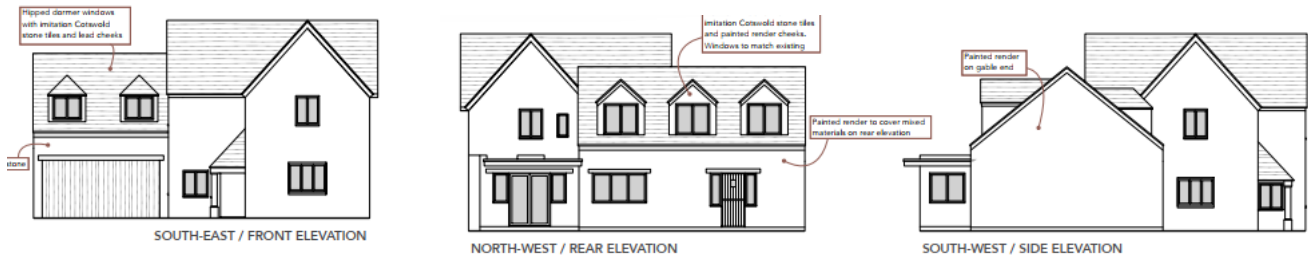
PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks planning permission for the addition of dormer windows and other alterations to the front and rear elevations of the garage of a dwellinghouse. The application has been submitted using householder application forms.

Currently, the attached garage is set back from the principal elevation of the dwelling and represents a C20th addition to the property. The garage is a pitched roof build, incorporating matching materials to that of the main building. Its current built form incorporates a single large garage door, whilst previous permissions allowed the garage to undergo a loft conversion to enable the creation of a further bedroom above, which is served by 2 rooflights to the front elevation, positioned just beneath the ridgeline.



Existing Front, Rear and Side Elevations



Proposed Front, Rear and Side Elevations

The roof form to the rear of the property exhibits a slightly staggered, asymmetrical appearance, with the rear ridgeline dipping at the point where it intersects with the eaves of the rear gable. A large flat roof rear projecting dormer window serves the loft conversion to light the bedroom above the garage, whilst a further flat-roof dormer is positioned adjacent which serves a first floor bathroom. Both rear facing dormers differ in scale and design, contributing to a varied appearance across the rear elevation.

The proposal seeks the removal of the front facing rooflights to the garage and the insertion of 2 hipped dormers, positioned at opposite ends of the garage roof, which would be constructed from imitation Cotswold stone tiles and lead cheeks. Additionally, to the rear of the building, it is proposed to remove both of the existing flat-roof dormers and replace with 3 hipped roof dormers, similarly constructed from imitation Cotswold stone tiles. To facilitate the insertion of the dormers, it would be necessary to alter the roof pitch of the garage to a slightly steeper gradient, whilst the rear ridgeline would be altered from its current staggered appearance to become a consistent and symmetrical arrangement.

At ground floor level, the garage currently provides parking to the front of the building, with an integrated utility room located to the rear and a bedroom positioned above. The proposed front and rear dormer windows would allow for the enlargement of this first floor bedroom and the incorporation of an ensuite, while also facilitating the extension of the existing first floor bathroom. The introduction of the dormers would additionally enable an increase in the current ceiling height, which is presently constrained by the existing roof configuration and built form.

The dormer windows are proposed to be timber painted, to match those currently throughout the remainder of the property. In terms of dimensions, the current footprint of the garage will remain at approx. 7.5 deep by 5.1m wide, whilst the current height of approx. 6.2m will be increased from approx. 5.3m to 6.2m.

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The property known as The Old Post Office is a semi detached two storey dwellinghouse that is located on The Street in the village of Alderton, approximately 9m from Chippenham. The property forms part of three dwellings: The Old Post Office, Byways and The Gables. These buildings form a coherent group, using traditional materials and similar proportions. The dwelling is constructed from Cotswold stone with a stone slate tiled roof and painted timber windows, and features a prominent forward projecting gable with the main entrance set back.

The property has been subject to previous alterations and extensions, including the erection of the attached double garage to the side of the building and a rear extension including two rearward facing flat roofed dormer windows. The property lies within both the Alderton Conservation Area and the Cotswold National Landscape, with Grade II listed properties The Old School House, Walnut Cottage and Rose Cottage (formerly known as New Farm Cottages) located directly across the road from the main building. The surrounding area is characterised by detached and semi-detached properties of similar style and appearance to the application site, constructed predominantly from Cotswold stone, whilst further listed properties are located within the locality.



The application site is subject to the following planning policy constraints:

- Cotswold National Landscape
- Alderton Conservation Area
- Risk of flooding from surface water - low

RECENT, RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
PL/2021/10746 - Householder planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 23/2/2022 – Replacement of Rear Dormer Windows
N/08/01326/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 22/7/2008 – Extensions to Dwelling
N/06/02788/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 12/3/2007 – Extension to Dwelling
15/00785/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 8/4/2015 – Single Storey Rear Extension
16/01498/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 20/4/2016 – Removal of existing conservatory and erection of replacement. New flat roof to dining room and insertion of roof lantern. Extend roof tiles under the bathroom to be in line with utility room

RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Wiltshire Core Strategy:

- Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
- Core Policy 58: Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment

Wiltshire Design Guide:

- Appendix D – Design Guidance for Householder extensions

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

- Section 12: Achieving well designed places
- Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

The Planning Practice Guidance

National Design Guide

ISSUES

- Design and Impact upon the upon the character and context of the area and the National Landscape
- Residential Amenity
- Heritage Assets

CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATIONS

Luckington and Alderton Parish Council: No objection

The application was publicised by direct neighbour letter; however, no representations have been 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.

Design, character and appearance and impact on landscape

Under Section 245 of the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023, the Council must now 'seek to further' the purposes of the National Landscapes in its decision making. This legislative change strengthens the duty under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, which originally required that authorities 'have regard to' their conservation purpose. In assessing this proposal, the Council has actively considered how it will conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the National Landscape, in line with national legislation and the area's Management Plan.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in Paragraph 189, states that "great weight" should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes (formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty). Development within or affecting the setting of a National Landscape must demonstrate that it will not result in unacceptable harm to the special qualities of that area. Section 12 of the NPPF expects a good standard of design, whilst section 15 seeks to protect and enhance valued landscapes and recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires all development to protect, conserve, and where possible enhance the character and quality of Wiltshire's landscapes, giving particular weight to designated areas such as National Landscapes.

WCS Core Policy 57 requires development to respond positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, elevational design and materials, with particular regard required for the compatibility of the design with the existing building and its surroundings, together with the relationship to adjoining buildings and spaces.

The application property forms part of a group of Grade II listed buildings—The Old School House, Byways, and The Gables—which collectively exhibit a strong sense of architectural symmetry and historic coherence. The end properties, The Old Post Office and The Gables, are particularly significant in establishing this balanced composition, each displaying prominent front gables of matching roof pitch, the symmetrical features to the front facade, and fenestration patterns. Their identically positioned windows, entrance porches and detailing contribute to a clearly unified appearance which binds these properties. Although The Gables does not incorporate an attached garage or ancillary structure comparable to that of The Old Post Office, the integrity of its original principal elevation remains intact. This retention ensures that the symmetrical appearance and historic rhythm of the group are preserved. The buildings scale, proportions, and original architectural detailing compliment the surrounding built form, ensuring that the property contributes positively to the visual continuity of the street.

The Street in Alderton presents a distinctly rural and historically grounded streetscene, with the village defined by a well-preserved historic streetscape with a linear arrangement, characterised by traditional architectural forms, locally distinctive materials and consistent rooflines which unify this location. Properties within this vicinity display natural stone façades, historic detailing, and established garden boundaries that contribute to a cohesive and visually harmonious setting and helps maintain the village's scenic quality, visual continuity and historic charm.

The attached garage is a modern addition to the property and does not form part of the original built form. As outlined previously, the group of buildings exhibits a broadly symmetrical appearance and whilst the garage is a subordinate structure recessed from the principal façade, the introduction of dormer windows on its front elevation would disrupt the balance and visual harmony of the group. Dormer windows to the front-facing elevation is not considered to be sympathetic to the architectural character of the buildings collectively and would undermine the coherent composition that defines their appearance

Roof profiles form a key part of the historic streetscape, and in this case there are few examples of dormer windows being inserted into the primary elevations facing the street. Indeed, the few examples which can be seen are set well back from the road and are added to overtly modern properties. Accordingly, it is concluded that the front facing dormers would appear visually intrusive and erode the established rhythm and integrity of the street scene, giving rise to clear and demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the locality.

Notwithstanding the above, the proposed rear facing hipped-roof dormer windows are considered acceptable. Their placement would be concealed from public viewpoints and would replace two existing dormers, albeit with a revised design from the current flat roofed forms. When viewed in conjunction with the proposed marginal increase in ridge height of the garage, the proposed rear dormers are regarded as appropriate and reflective of the contemporary alterations that have already occurred to the rear of the building and would not detract from the overall character of the property when viewed from the rear.

Overall, the proposal is considered unacceptable as it conflicts with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, Policies CE1, CE4 and CE7 of the Cotswold National Landscape Management Plan (2025–2030), the Wiltshire Design Guide, and the objectives of Sections 12 and 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The introduction of front-facing dormer windows does not integrate sympathetically with the established character of the surrounding area, nor does it demonstrate compatibility with the prevailing form, scale or appearance of adjoining buildings or the wider locality. The development would result in an intrusive and incongruous addition that undermines the coherence of the streetscene and erodes the visual qualities that define this locality, resulting in harmful visual impact upon the streetscene and surrounding area.

Heritage

From the point of view of the historic environment the main statutory tests are set out within the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Section 66 requires that special regard be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess. Section 72(1) of the Act requires the Council to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of designated Conservation Areas.

The Council's Core Strategy Policy CP58 'Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment' requires that designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance and encourages proposals which improve the condition of heritage assets at risk.

The Council's Core Strategy CP 57: Ensuring high quality design requires a high quality of design in all new developments. The policy requires applicants to "demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through (amongst other things) responding to the value of the natural and historic environment and being sympathetic to and conserving historic buildings and landscapes. Development is required to respond positively to the existing in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting.

The NPPF outlines government policy for planning. Chapter 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development.

As referenced in the section above, policy CE7 to the Cotswold National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030 requires that development should be delivered in a way that is compatible with and seek to further the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their setting.

The property is located within the Alderton Conservation Area, positioned along the main route through the village and therefore occupying a highly prominent and visually sensitive location where the consistency of the built forms of the properties, materials and roofscapes is fundamental to the area's established character and appearance. It is evident that the primary contribution the building makes to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area derives from its front elevation, especially being a part of a wider group of historic buildings that includes Byways and The Gables. This façade retains much of its original architectural integrity, including the distinctive use of Cotswold stone, which remains a key feature of the building's historic character.

Within the immediate vicinity of the site, there are several designated heritage assets, including the Grade II listed Old School House located directly opposite the application property, and the Grade II listed Walnut Cottage and Rose Cottage positioned to the north-east, also fronting The Street. Although the application site is situated across the highway from these listed buildings, their setting is not confined solely to their curtilages given that it extends to the wider streetscene.

The site has previously been the subject of a pre-application enquiry, which sought advice on the acceptability of alterations to the existing garage extension, including a raised roof, and

front and rear dormers. A range of options were considered, particularly for the treatment of the new insertions to the front elevation. These included a single dormer, two dormer windows (reflective of the current proposal), or amended conservation rooflights necessitated by the increased ridge height. That pre-application advice confirmed that dormer windows to the rear elevation would be acceptable, but that additional dormers to the front elevation would disrupt the existing symmetry of the existing group of buildings and detract from the current sense of hierarchy of design. A later communication expressed a preference to minimise new additions to the front roofslope of the garage, and to restrict openings to an alteration of the existing rooflights.

With regards to the proposed rear facing dormers, it is noted that the site has been subject to previous extensions and alterations to the rear of the building which are not prominently positioned to be visible from the public realm. As a result, only a small section of the original rear wall remains exposed, as the rear elevation is dominated by the modern alterations which have diminished the overarching historic rear façade. However, it is considered that the raising of the ridgeline and resulting insertion of 3 hipped roof dormer windows would be acceptable given its position to the rear of the building, away from public view, and do not form part of the principal streetscene that contributes most significantly to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The dormer windows would constitute a more sympathetic and uniform arrangement to the rear of the building, whilst the materials would enable its integration with the current aesthetic and character of the building. Due to their limited visibility and separation from the designated heritage assets, the rear dormers would have no meaningful impact on the setting of the nearby listed buildings. In this context, the proposed rear alterations are not considered to undermine the special architectural or historic interest of the Conservation Area, nor do they detract from the significance of the surrounding heritage assets.

However, it is considered that the front facing dormers would introduce a modern and visually intrusive element into views that are currently characterised by traditional rooflines and historic building forms. Owing to their size, form and elevated positioning, the dormers would read as dominant features which would directly impact the established character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Furthermore, the design, scale and detailing of the proposed dormers fail to reflect or reinforce the traditional roofscape that forms an important part of the Conservation Area, resulting in a negative impact on both the heritage assets and their wider historic environment.

Furthermore, in relation to the close proximity of the application site with the Grade II listed properties - The Old School House, Walnut Cottage and Rose Cottage - the proposed front facing dormers would be clearly visible in views towards the listed buildings and would sit directly within their backdrop when looking along the street. By introducing a modern and visually prominent feature into these views, the dormers would change the traditional appearance of the streetscene that contributes to the Conservation Area and the wider setting of those identified listed buildings in and around the site. Therefore, the proposed development would still have an impact on their setting because it affects how the heritage assets are appreciated within their current position.

The resulting harm from the proposed front facing dormers is considered to be low to medium. The proposal would give rise to a degree of visual harm in the context of the established

historic environment, which undermines the overall significance of the heritage asset and the wider village setting. It is considered that the front dormers would detract from the unified appearance of the adjoining group of historic properties, as well as the wider historic character of the village.

Under the provisions afforded by paragraph 215 to the NPPF, less than substantial harm must be weighed against the public benefits associated with the proposal. In this case, the submission does not identify any public benefits resulting from the proposed works, thereby it is considered that any public benefits are currently only known to the Applicant themselves. Although the level of heritage harm is assessed as low to medium, Officers are unable to identify any public benefits that would outweigh or justify this harm. Consequently, the proposal fails to meet the policy requirement to demonstrate that the identified harm is necessary to achieve a public benefit.

Although no formal comments have been provided by Wiltshire Council's Conservation Officers in relation to this current application, their views were sought during the earlier pre-application enquiry. At that stage, the Officer raised concerns regarding the potential impact of the proposed works on the streetscene, noting that, while the existing garage maintains a clearly subordinate relationship to the principal building, the alterations then proposed risked undermining this established hierarchy. It is recognised that the earlier pre-application scheme involved more substantial changes—including a new street-facing gable constructed in coarse Cotswold stone, matching roof tiles and window detailing, together with an increased ridgeline—compared with the proposals presently under consideration. Nevertheless, the Conservation Officer identified the likelihood of harm arising from alterations to the front elevation which could adversely affect the building's contribution to the historic streetscene.

Overall, the proposed development would result in harm to the setting and significance of Grade II listed buildings, The Old School House, Walnut Cottage and Rose Cottage and would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Alderton Conservation Area. No public benefits have been identified to outweigh the harm identified and therefore the proposal conflicts with Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, particularly paragraph 215.

Amenity

Point vii of Core Policy 57 - Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that developments do not adversely affect neighbouring properties. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly Paragraph 135(f), stresses that planning decisions should ensure developments provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

The application site is attached to neighbouring property 'Byways'. These properties are part of a wider group of historic buildings which also includes 'The Gables'. The application site is the end property within this small terrace of properties. To the other side of the application site is 'Field House', located to the SW.

In relation to the adjacent properties – Field House and Byways - the proposal does not include any increase to the overall footprint of the building, and the existing separation distances between dwellings would be maintained. Field House is set further back from the highway than the application property, which means that the proposed front dormers would be partially screened by the existing rear garage and loft conversion. However, views toward the rear of the dwelling—and therefore towards the proposed rear dormers—remain possible.

The rear dormers are oriented to overlook the applicant's own rear garden rather than neighbouring plots. Given that the current arrangement already includes two rear dormers, the addition of a further dormer in the same location of the roof slope is not considered to result in any greater level of overlooking than presently exists. Furthermore, the increase in the roof height to enable to dormer windows is not considered to result in any overbearing effects, owing to the existing separation distances.

Whilst directly overlooking The Old School House, the front facing dormer windows are not considered to result in unacceptable impact to their residential amenity. The orientation of The Old School House results in the front facing elevation demonstrating a ground floor window, whilst the attached historical tower to the building features smaller windows at above ground floor level which are further set back from the frontage. The Old School House is positioned across the highway from the application site, whilst the existing garage subject to the application is sufficiently set back from the highway, resulting in a sufficient distance between the properties, thereby helping to mitigate against any unacceptable impact to residential amenity.

Given the position of 'The Gables', views are largely obscured to the application site due to being positioned at the other end of the terrace to the application site.

The proposed development has been assessed in terms of its potential impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties, with particular regard to loss of light, overshadowing, loss of privacy, and overbearing effects. No representations have been received by neighbouring properties, and overall Officers consider that the proposed front and rear dormer windows, with associated increase in the ridgeline to the garage roof, will not result in loss of light, overshadowing or overbearing impacts to the neighbouring properties, whilst the proposal would not result in unacceptable impact to their overall residential amenity.

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

Biodiversity Net Gain

Householder planning applications are exempt from the requirement to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain under Schedule 7A, Section 4(2)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as inserted by the Environment Act 2021.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development, by reason of the identified harm, conflicts with the aims and objectives of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposal fails to demonstrate compliance with the relevant policies and guidance, and no overriding material considerations have been identified that would justify a departure from the development plan.

Accordingly, the application is recommended for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION: That Planning Permission be REFUSED.

The proposed development, by reason of its scale, design, form and siting, the proposal fails to respond positively to the character, context and distinctiveness of the main building, the historical and symmetrical built form of the wider group of buildings and their setting.. The proposal would represent uncharacteristic development to the vicinity which would be visually incongruous, overly dominant and unsympathetic to the character of the area, including the Alderton Conservation Area and listed buildings within close proximity, resulting in low to medium heritage harm as no clear and convincing justification or public benefit has been demonstrated to outweigh this harm.

As such, the proposal is contrary to Core Policies 57 and 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015), Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the design principles set out in Appendix D of the Wiltshire Design Guide SPD, and paragraphs 131 and 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework and chapters 12, 15 and 16 of the NPPF, which collectively seek to ensure high-quality design that respects local character and integrates appropriately with its surroundings, and requires development to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.