

APPLICATION FOR HOUSEHOLDER PLANNING PERMISSION DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2025/09433
APPLICATION TYPE:	Householder planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	13 Alma Place, Marlborough, SN8 1AF
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Garage conversion into a home office, new kitchen window, roof light and internal alterations.
RECOMMENDATION:	That Planning Permission be GRANTED

PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks planning permission for the conversion of the existing garage into a habitable room, a new window within the western elevation for the benefit of the kitchen, a flat roof light above a single storey, ground floor room, all of which is for the benefit of internal alterations and rationalization of the ground floor layout of the property.

The alterations to the garage would not involve any external alterations, the garage door would be retained and this space already benefits from a window on its southern side elevation.

The proposed window into the kitchen would be on the western side elevation which fronts onto Alma Place. It is proposed to enlarge the kitchen in this location with an existing study/home office being relocated into the garage. The proposed new roof light would be above a ground floor room at the back (eastern) side of the property where there are no natural openings.

The proposed new fenestration would be in timber to match the host property.

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The application site lies on a narrow, cobbled lane which takes its only access and egress from the main High Street in the town centre of Marlborough. It is a modern property, only having been built in the 1990's and currently benefits from one, adjoining garage. Alma Place comprises a small, residential turning with historic cottages fronting directly onto the lane on the western side and on the eastern side are the rear of tall buildings in the adjacent lane and No 13 Alma Place – the application site.

Set within the town centre of Marlborough, and the designated Conservation Area, it is noted that the cobbled surface of the lane and the dwellings on the western side are all listed structures. This area of Marlborough is washed over by the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary

K/15748 - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 19/4/1990 – ERECTION OF TWO-STOREY DWELLING INCORPORATING EXISTING GARAGES AND ASSOCIATED WORKS

K/16243 - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 2/8/1990 – REPLACING EXISTING GARAGES WITH TWO STOREY THREE BEDROOM DWELLING & ASSOCIATED WORKS

RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Wiltshire Core Strategy:

- 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 61: Transport and New Development
- Core Policy 64: Demand Management

Marlborough Neighbourhood Plan: Made March 2023

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

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The Planning Practice Guidance

National Design Guide

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Marlborough Town Council: No objection

WCC Highways – Comment

On paper this proposal appears to result in the loss of a garage . However, the existing garage measures small (even by old standards) and I am likely to accept that in practice it has probably not been utilised for parking in the past. The space to the front which provides one space is to remain. The proposal also does not appear to be adding any extra bedrooms. As such I am minded to accept the change despite the apparent loss of a garage.

REPRESENTATIONS

No comments 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.

Design and Impact upon the character and context of the area

Core Policy 57 - Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that all new development is of high design quality, reflecting local context, character, and distinctiveness.

The proposed development as proposed would not add to the scale, bulk or form of the existing dwelling on the site. The conversion of the garage would not have any apparent signs of change when viewed from the public realm. The garage door would be retained, and this structure already benefits from a window on its southern side elevation.

The proposed kitchen window is for the benefit of an enlarged kitchen area, with the existing study being relocated into the converted garage. Whilst this would add an opening on the western side of the property fronting onto Alma Place, this is not considered visually unacceptable or out of place, given the siting of the properties on the western side of the lane, which all benefit from similar windows in close proximity to the access lane. The proposed roof light would not be visible from any vantage point, being located where a single storey element of the property adjoins the tall, rear wall of properties in the adjoining lane.

In this respect, there is not considered to be any significant detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the site and setting.

There is no objection from the Town Council and no representations from neighbouring occupiers have been received. Albeit the site is washed over by the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, the development is closely associated with the existing built form on the site and in this setting and there would be no views from the wider landscape.

A condition to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the proposed plans and palette of materials is considered appropriate and necessary, meets the statutory tests and can be appended to subsequent Decision Notice.

Having regard to the above, the proposal complies with the design principles set out in Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Appendix D of the Wiltshire Design Guide.

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 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.

The internal alterations, use of the garage and ground floor accommodation in the manner proposed is not considered to result in loss of light, overshadowing or overbearing impact upon adjacent neighbouring occupiers.

The proposed kitchen layout and window would introduce fenestration on this existing western side blank wall, and this would result in a new opening directly opposite the cottages on the western side of the lane. However, whilst there may be some ability for inter-overlooking through ground floor windows, the cottages are already sited on a narrow land where passers by can freely walk past in very close proximity to these windows and this window would only serve a kitchen. Therefore, on balance, it is not considered that a reason for refusal could be justified in this instance.

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

Highways Impact

Core Policy 57 (xiv) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that development must meet the requirements of Core Policy 61. This policy requires proposals to be capable of being served by safe access to the highway network. Core Policy 64 seeks to ensure compliance with parking standards set out in the Local Transport Plan.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly Paragraph 115 and 116, requires that development proposals do not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety and that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users.

The proposal would result in the loss of a garage space and therefore the Council's Highway Engineers were consulted for their specialist views. However, it was noted that the existing garage measures on the small side and it is accepted that in practice it is not used for the parking of a vehicle. Furthermore, the space to the front provides one space which is to remain. The proposal also does not add any extra bedrooms and as such the loss is considered acceptable despite the apparent loss of the garage.

Furthermore, this is a town centre location with direct access to the adjacent High Street, where there is a range of retail outlets and employment opportunities to cover day-to-day needs.

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.

Heritage Impact

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.

During the course of the assessment, the Case Officer sought advice from the Council's Conservation Officer to discuss the need for Listed Building Consent as the site abuts the listed cobbled lane. However, as the works are limited to the change of use of the garage, which is set back and the proposed windows are above that asset, it was not considered that such a proposal was required.

The site is located firmly within the designated Conservation Area of Marlborough and there are listed properties in proximity to the site. However, No 13 is a modern property with existing windows similar to that proposed on its other elevations. These openings are already seen in context with those assets and are visible from the public realm and the one additional window is not considered to result in harm to the site or setting of the heritage properties and the cobbled lane.

A condition to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the plans and material schedule proposed is considered appropriate and necessary in this instance and can be appended to any grant of permission.

The proposal, by virtue of its scale, design, and use of materials, is considered to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and setting of the listed buildings and the heritage asset of the cobbled lane.

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.

National Landscape

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.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in Paragraph 176, 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.

Albeit the site is washed over by the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, the proposed works would only be visible from the streetscene directly adjacent to the property with no views available from the wider area.

The proposal, by virtue of its scale, siting, and design, would not harm the special qualities or scenic character of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.

The development therefore complies with Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Paragraph 176 of the NPPF in conserving and enhancing the National Landscape.

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. Nevertheless, as required by the regulations, any approval must include an Informative reminding the applicants of the biodiversity net gain requirements.

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 highway safety, heritage, or ecology.

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 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:
 - Application Form. Received on 01 December 2025
 - Supporting Statement. Received on 01 December 2025
 - 2509 3_001 Rev A. Location Plan. Received on 02 December 2025
 - 2509 3_002 Existing Site and Roof Plan. Received on 01 December 2025
 - 2509 3_003 Existing Plans and Elevations. Received on 01 December 2025
 - 2509 3_004 Rev A. Proposed Site and Roof Plan. Received on 02 December 2025
 - 2509 3_005 Proposed Plans and Elevations. Received on 01 December 2025

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.

Informative Notes

Biodiversity Net Gain

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition “(the biodiversity gain condition”) that development may not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

If the onsite habitat includes irreplaceable habitat (within the meaning of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) there are additional requirements for the content and approval of Biodiversity Gain Plans.

If planning permission is granted on an application made under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (application to develop land without compliance with conditions previously attached) and a Biodiversity Gain Plan was approved in relation to the previous planning permission ("the earlier Biodiversity Gain Plan") there are circumstances when the earlier Biodiversity Gain Plan is regarded as approved for the purpose of discharging the biodiversity gain condition subject to which the section 73 planning permission is granted.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be Wiltshire Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply.

In this case, a Biodiversity Gain Plan does not need to be submitted as the development complies with one or more of the exemptions. Commencing development which is subject to the biodiversity gain condition without an approved Biodiversity Gain Plan could result in enforcement action for breach of planning control.

For further information please refer to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/biodiversity-net-gain#developer-guidance>