

APPLICATION FOR FULL-PLANNING PERMISSION CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2025/09561
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Antico Cafe, 6a Littlebrook Centre, Bath Road, Melksham, SN12 6LP
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Retrospective application for the erection of an open covered platform for outdoor seating area
RECOMMENDATION:	That Planning Permission be GRANTED

PROPOSAL

The application seeks planning permission for an open-sided covered platform on the northern elevation of Antico Café. This provides a covered area for users of the café to sit outside.

The following photographs were taken on site and show the structure in place:

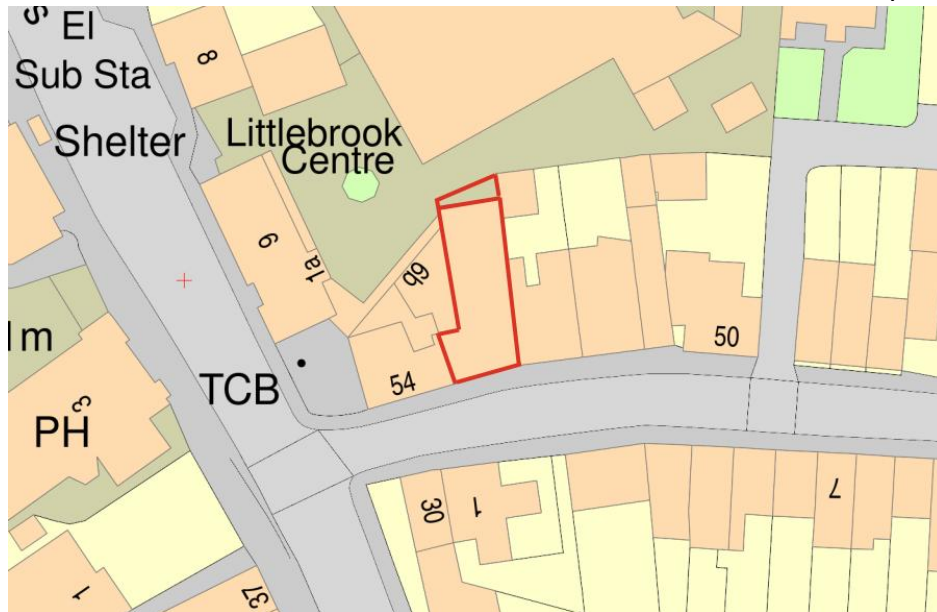


The platform projects 2.4m from the north elevation of the building at its widest point, narrowing to about 1.25m on the northwest corner. It extends the width of the shop front, with

a central ramped access to the café door. It has a low pitched roof which is 2.8m at its highest point. This is black corrugated sheeting held up by vertical timber supports. The platform area is also timber and approximately 400mm high.

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The site is Antico Café, outlined in red on the extract of the submitted location plan below.

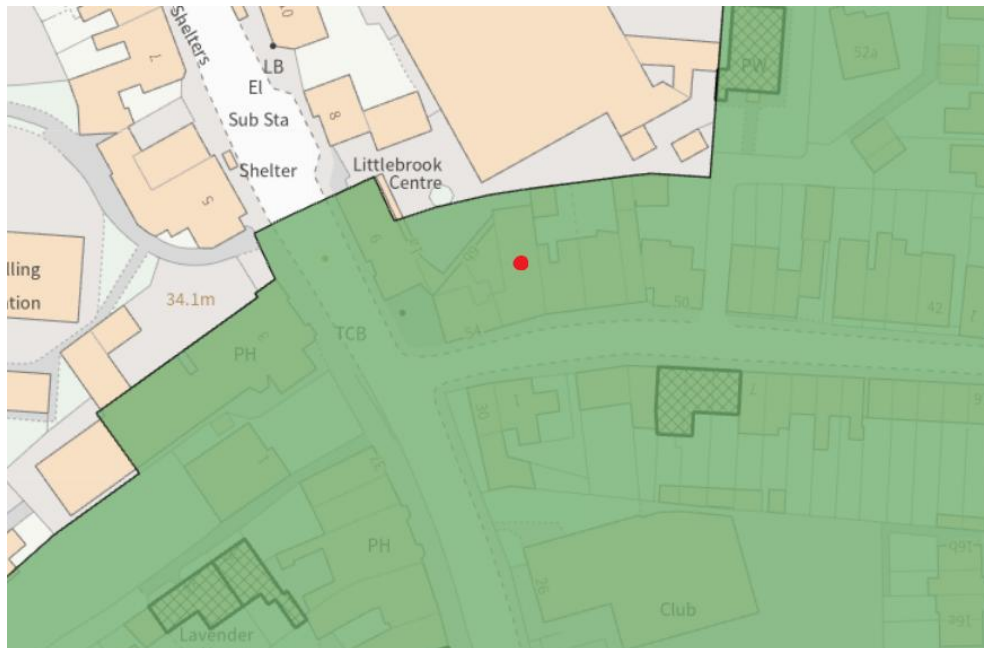


The café has a frontage on Union Street, to the south, as shown on the google street view image below.



The development now being considered is on the north elevation of the cafe, which forms part of the Littlebrook Centre where there are a number of small shops and a Waitrose supermarket.

The site is within the Melksham Conservation Area, as shown in green on the plan below. Listed buildings are shown in black hatching – it can be seen that there are none in the vicinity to the north of the site.



The site is in flood zone 1, with no particular risk of surface water flooding identified here.

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
W/07/00674/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 12/4/2007 – Change of use from A1 to A3 (eat in coffee shop/restaurant)
W/06/00303/USE_L - change of use to cafe - 6B Littlebrook Centre, Bath Road, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 6LP – Change of use of first floor to office

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- National Design Guide

Development Plan:

The development plan for Wiltshire comprises the *Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)* (adopted January 2015) and any made neighbourhood plans, which remains the principal statutory planning document guiding development across the county. In line with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Though the development plan is considered as a whole, those parts deemed to be particularly relevant to this application are listed below:

The adopted *Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)*, with particular regard to:

- Core Policy 1 Settlement Strategy
- Core Policy 2 Delivery Strategy
- Core Policy 15 Spatial Strategy for the Melksham Community Area
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
- Core Policy 58 Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development
- Core Policy 62 Development Impacts on the Transport Network

Saved Policies of the West Wiltshire Local Plan (WWLP)

- Policy SP1 Town Centre Shopping
- Policy SP4 Primary Retail Frontage

Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2

- Policy 9: Town Centre
- Policy 20: Locally Distinctive, High Quality Design

Supplementary Planning Documents and other Guidance:

- Wiltshire Design Guide (adopted April 2024)
- Wiltshire Local Transport Plan including the Car Parking Strategy and Cycling Strategy

ISSUES

The main issues that need to be addressed in this case include:

- Whether the development is acceptable in principle (CP 1 and 2)
- Whether the scheme constitutes high quality design (CP 57)
- Whether the scheme would have an acceptable impact upon the reasonable living conditions of the adjoining occupants (CP 57)
- Whether the scheme would preserve or enhance the historic environment (CP 58)
- Whether the proposal would have a negative effect upon highway safety (CP 61 and 62)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WC Highways: No objection

"I refer to the above planning application to which no highway objection is raised."

WC Public Protection: No comment

"No comment"

Melksham Town Council: No objection

“MTC does not object to the application.”

REPRESENTATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), the application was publicised by way of:

- Neighbour notification letters sent to adjoining and nearby properties;
- A site notice displayed near the site.

These methods were used to inform interested parties and provide a period of 21 days for comments to be submitted.

Representations have been received from 15 people, all in support of the application. Supporters consider the raised and covered seating area to be a positive addition to the Littlebrook Centre, enhancing what was previously described as a plain or uninspiring courtyard setting and adding character to the area.

Comments highlight the practical benefits of the structure, including the provision of level and accessible seating, incorporation of the existing ramp, and shelter from sun and rain, allowing more flexible year-round use of the café.

Several representations note that the structure is modest in scale, sympathetic to its surroundings and does not result in harm to neighbouring amenity, pedestrian movement or the wider character of the area.

Overall, contributors consider the development to support the vitality of the café and the local community without giving rise to any adverse impacts.

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 Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and, where applicable, any made Neighbourhood Plans. Consideration has also been given to the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as a material consideration in the assessment.

Principle of Development

Policy Context

Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) establishes a hierarchy of settlements to guide where development should be focused. The policy prioritises growth in Principal Settlements (e.g., Salisbury, Chippenham, Trowbridge), Market Towns,

Local Service Centres, and limits development in Large and Small Villages or outside defined settlements unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy of the WCS sets out how development will be distributed and delivered across Wiltshire, emphasising sustainable patterns of growth, plan-led development, and alignment with infrastructure provision. Windfall development must comply with the principles of sustainable development, and development outside settlement boundaries is generally not permitted unless meeting specific policy exceptions.

Together, CP1 and CP2 ensure that new development is strategically located, sustainable, and supports the character and function of Wiltshire's communities. Melksham is a Market Town, and the site is within the development boundary. The principle of the development is therefore acceptable in this location, subject to consideration of detailed planning matters discussed below.

Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

Policy Context

Core Policy 57 of the WCS requires high-quality design that:

- Enhances local character.
- Responds to the natural, historic, and built environment.
- Retains important features (e.g., trees, hedges).
- Supports sustainable construction and compatibility with surrounding uses.
- Creates safe, legible, and accessible spaces.

Section 12 of the NPPF emphasises design that is:

- Visually attractive.
- Functionally effective.
- Contributes to the quality of the built environment.

The Wiltshire Design Guide encourages sensitivity to local character, materials, and architectural styles and supports modern living standards while maintaining aesthetic and functional quality.

Building for a Healthy Life Framework promotes healthy, inclusive, and sustainable places. The document encourages:

- Walkability.
- Access to green space.
- Active design principles for well-being.

Assessment and Conclusion

The structure is lightweight and open-sided, allowing views through the platform and ensuring it remains visually unobtrusive within the courtyard setting. Its modest scale and simple form are appropriate to the town centre context, where it sits among smaller shops and the adjacent Waitrose supermarket. The structure does not dominate or detract from the surrounding built environment and is not readily prominent within the pedestrianised area. Overall, the development is considered to be a suitable addition in terms of design and its impact on the character and appearance of the area.

Impact on Heritage Assets

Policy Context

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 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 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. In particular:

Paragraph 208 requires LPAs should “avoid or minimise any conflict” between the heritage asset’s conservation (which includes achieving its optimum viable use) and any aspect of a proposal.

Paragraph 210 requires local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable new uses and of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraphs 212 requires “great weight” to be given to an asset’s conservation “irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.”

Paragraph 213 advises that harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should require “clear and convincing justification”.

The Planning Practice Guidance provides guidance on interpreting the NPPF.

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.

Assessment and Conclusion

The site lies on the northern edge of the Melksham Conservation Area. The structure is modest in scale, lightweight, and open-sided, allowing views through it and avoiding any visual obstruction of the wider courtyard or surrounding buildings. Its simple form and unobtrusive

appearance ensure that it does not dominate or detract from the historic character of the area. The development integrates well with the town centre context, maintaining the setting of the Conservation Area and respecting the local built environment. Overall, the structure is considered acceptable in heritage terms and does not harm the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Amenity

Policy Context

Core Policy 57 (Point vii) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to respect the amenity of existing occupants and ensure appropriate amenity levels for future residents.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly Paragraph 135, reinforces the need for development to provide a high standard of amenity for both existing and future users.

Assessment and Conclusion

The structure is positioned within a pedestrianised courtyard in the town centre, where a mix of commercial uses and residential flats above shops is present. Given its modest scale, open-sided form, and limited footprint, it is unlikely to result in any adverse impact on neighbouring amenity in terms of overlooking, overbearing effect, or noise. No representations have raised concerns regarding amenity, and Melksham Town Council has not objected. Wiltshire Council's Public Protection Officers have been consulted and raised no objections to the development. It is therefore considered acceptable in terms of its impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties and users of the surrounding area.

Highways Impacts and Parking

Policy Context

Transport implications are a key factor in assessing planning applications, especially for larger developments. Proposals must demonstrate:

- Safe and suitable access for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and those with mobility impairments.
- No severe residual impacts on the surrounding highway network.
- Promotion of sustainable travel, reducing reliance on private vehicles.
- Adequate parking and cycle provision, in line with adopted standards.
- Protection and enhancement of public rights of way and active travel routes.

Assessment and Conclusion

The structure is located entirely within the site and does not encroach onto public highway land. Wiltshire Council Highways Officers have been consulted and have raised no objection to the development. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in terms of highway safety and access.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

The development comprises a modest, open-sided covered platform providing outdoor seating for Antico Café. It is lightweight in appearance, unobtrusive within the town centre courtyard, and does not adversely affect the character or appearance of the area in accordance with WCS CP57, saved Policies SP1 and SP4 of the WWLP and Policy 9 of the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2.

The structure respects the setting of the Melksham Conservation Area and is considered acceptable in heritage terms, complying with CP58 of the WCS, Section 12 of the NPPF and the heritage aims of Policy 20 of the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2.

In accordance with CP57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the development does not result in unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity, and no concerns have been raised by consultees, including Melksham Town Council or local residents.

The structure is located entirely within the site and does not impact the public highway, with Wiltshire Council Highways Officers raising no objection.

On this basis, and in the absence of any objections, planning permission is recommended.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to conditions

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

Location Plan received 13 January 2026

Site Plan received 16 December 2025

Design and Access Statement received 16 December 2025

Proposed Floor & Elevation Plan received 16 December 2025

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