

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Application No: PL/2025/09634 and PL/2025/09766
Erection of pair of hinged steel gates across private driveway by
attachment to wall of adjacent / neighbouring building
Old Stable House, 12A High Street, Melksham, SN12 6JU

Please find following comments in respect of the above application(s).

Recommendations:

	Comment
	Support in principle subject to amendments to the scheme (as set out below)
X	Support subject to conditions (as set out below)
	Object (for reasons set out below)
	No objections

Scope of comments: the following comments relate to the built historic environment.

Policy: 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 16 requires that special regard be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 also 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, 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. Paragraphs 214-216 of the NPPF require a balanced approach with any harm which would be caused being weighed against the potential public benefits which might be achieved. Paragraph 210 requires local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

National 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 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 'Ensuring high quality design and place shaping': A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality.

Historic England Advice Note 2 – Making changes to Heritage Assets illustrates the application of policies set out in the NPPF in determining applications for PP and LBC.

Site and assets considered: The property is an unlisted building in Melksham Conservation Area. The proposed gate would be attached to the side wall of two neighbouring buildings both of which are Grade II listed. The property also affects the setting of numerous other listed buildings in the locality.

Proposal: The proposal seeks to a pair of hinged steel gates across private driveway by attachment to wall of adjacent / neighbouring building.

Relevant planning history: PL/2022/02903 - Permanent change of use of 2 buildings from use class E (commercial, business and service) to class C3 (dwellinghouses). Construction of ground floor rear extension to one building (building A) to form kitchen. Replacement of all windows and external doors on all 3 buildings with upvc double glazed units. Internal works to all 3 buildings including new or reconfigured staircases, new kitchen and bathroom facilities. Installation of external air source heat pumps to all 3 buildings. (approved).

Issues: impact on the listed building, impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings, impact on the conservation area.

Information considered/provided: Paragraph 207 requires that applicants describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. This should include sufficient information to provide a clear understanding of the significance of the heritage asset and its setting and the potential impact of any proposals on that significance. In this case, the applications are accompanied by a "Design and Access Statement" which provides sufficient information to understand the impact of the proposals and is proportionate to their scope. The requirements of the NPPF are therefore met in this respect.

However, paragraph 208 also provides for the local planning authority to make its own assessment of impact and the following heritage recommendations are offered on this basis.

Significance of assets and contribution of setting: The NPPF defines significance as the "value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be **archaeological**, **architectural**, **artistic** or **historic**. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting." Historic England assesses significance in a similar manner, referring to evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values of a place.

In this case the significance of the site lies largely with its historic character and intimate courtyard space - its form, layout and architectural expression which have significant aesthetic and architectural interest and which contribute to the character of the conservation area.

Assessment: This is my second response and follows on from the submission of amended plans. The property lies within Melksham Conservation Area. Both of the neighbouring properties 12 & 14 High Street on either side of the driveway are Grade II Listed.

It is proposed to install an asymmetric pair of steel gates hinged on each side, locking together and additionally secured by drop bolts to the driveway surface. Steel has been selected as in box section or tubular form it is considerably lighter than solid wrought iron for attachment to the adjacent building by hinge plates, and when finished in black is of similar appearance.

The design of the proposed gates has now been amended to simple vertical bar. In conservation terms this is considered a sympathetic traditional design appropriate to the proposed location and significance of the heritage assets.

Summary & conclusion: The NPPF confirms that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). It makes clear that any harm to a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification.

Subject to a condition regarding the proposed finish, the impact of the proposals on heritage assets will be neutral and the requirements of current conservation legislation, policy or guidance are considered to be met and there is therefore no objection to the approval of the application.