

Design and Access Statement

Little Robins Nursery
3 St Margarets Gardens, Melksham SN12 7BT



This Design and Access Statement forms one of the main supporting documents to this planning application. It provides key information on the proposed site and design. Furthermore, this Design and Access Statement should be read in conjunction with the application forms, plans, site survey and all other supplementary documents submitted as part of the planning application.

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1.0 Introduction

This statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicant who seeks full planning permission to increase the footprint of the nursery in order to meet demand for nursery spaces and better enhance the existing learning environment.

1.1 Setting

Little Robins Nursery is situated in a predominantly residential part of Melksham, a small market town in Wiltshire. The surrounding area comprises a mix of modern housing estates and older, established streets, reflecting steady local growth. Local amenities and the town centre are within easy reach, via Sandridge Road (A3102) and other nearby thoroughfares that carry steady traffic that links the neighbourhood to Melksham's commercial areas and regional routes.



1.1.1 A map showing the site [red] in context with Melksham, and Sandridge Road (A3102) in [yellow]

1.2 Site

3 St Margarets Gardens, Melksham SN12 7BT (Little Robins Nursery) is situated within a residential enclave characterised by modest, semi-detached houses set along a gently curving street. The site occupies a generous plot with a modest frontage onto St

Margarets Gardens and good pedestrian connectivity to local amenities and suburban routes. Plot boundaries are defined by low fences and hedging, providing a degree of enclosure while maintaining visual permeability to the street. Existing outdoor space includes a rear garden with mature shrubs and a level lawn, offering secure, contained play areas and natural surveillance from neighbouring properties. The surrounding urban grain is low-rise and domestic in scale, which establishes a context of human-scale proportions and limited vehicular movement, supporting a calm, child-friendly environment.



1.2.1 A closer view of the site [red] surrounded by sem-detached dwellings with local amenities along the A3102 [yellow]

1.3 Appearance

The building itself is a single to two storey domestic property adapted for early years use, with accessible ground floor accommodation, clear entry from the street, and windows facing both front and rear that afford daylighting and passive supervision of external play areas. Surface materials are predominantly brickwork, tiled roofs and painted timber joinery which is consistent with the local vernacular, contributing to the property's unobtrusive appearance within the streetscape.

Constraints include tight external space which necessitate careful layout to meet outdoor play, drop-off and servicing needs while preserving neighbouring amenity.

Opportunities include enhancing the rear garden as a secure, well-zoned play environment with soft landscaping and sensory elements, improving arrival and cycle/scooter storage at the street frontage, and employing subtle, sympathetic adaptations to the façade and boundary treatments to reinforce legibility and child-centred safety without compromising the character of the locality.

	
Street facing elevation showing existing materiality and building form	Log cabin used as play/learning space
	
Fences and mature vegetation enables privacy at ground floor level	View from the outdoor playground space
1.3.1 Selection of photos showing the appearance of the site and building	

1.4 History & Existing Use

3 St Margarets Gardens, Melksham (Little Robins Nursery) sits on a mid-to-late 20th-century suburban infill plot that, according to historic Ordnance Survey mapping and local archive indexes, was agricultural/open land in the 19th and early 20th centuries before being laid out for housing. The building at No.3 was constructed as a domestic bungalow/house and later adapted for early-years provision, the earliest records show that the bungalow was first converted to a children's day nursery in 1989; planning application number W89/1582. Ofsted records show the nursery, in its current form of Little Robins, was registered there on 31 March 2016.

The building is now used permanently as a day nursery for children aged 0-5 to attend. It presently has an internal ground floor area of approximately 193m², spread across the main building, a garage which is currently used as storage, and a log cabin.

	
1.4.1 A view of the current entrance zone	1.4.2 Children's enclosed playground
	
1.4.3 Main entrance from inside the nursery	1.4.4 Baby sleeping spaces

	
1.4.5 Log cabin and outdoor play spaces	1.4.6 Outdoor play areas

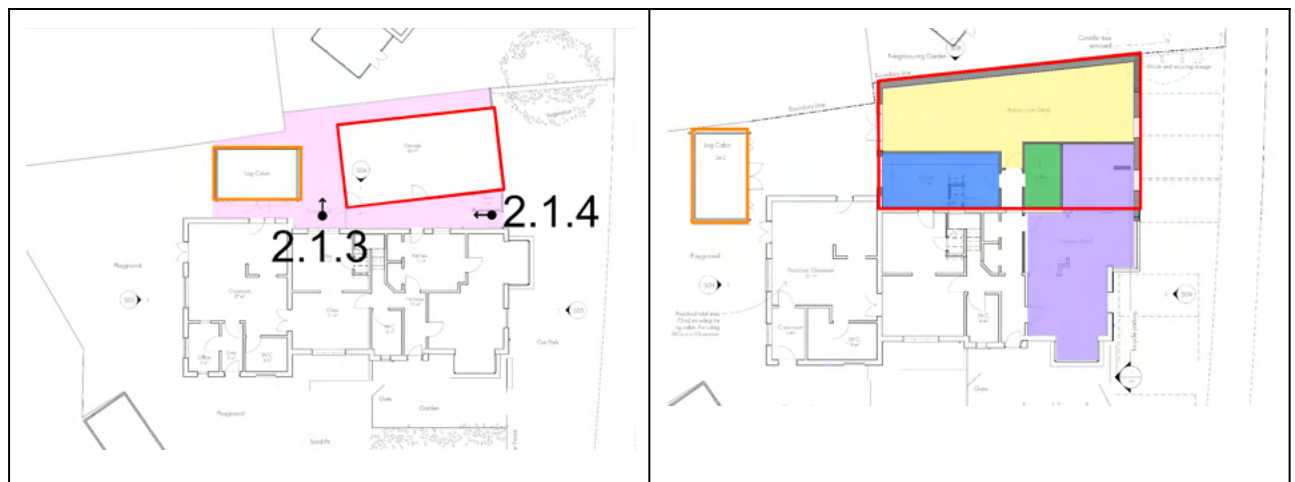
2.0 Proposed Development

This section details the design proposal to show how the building works and the intervention the proposal has on the site.

2.1 Amount and Scale

The proposed development seeks to better organise the existing exterior and interior spaces whilst also increasing the amount of space available. The overarching aim is to achieve a higher level of user occupancy along with the relevant facilities required for the increased users.

To achieve these aims we propose demolishing the existing garage and constructing a two-storey building adjacent to the neighbouring boundary (see 2.1.2). The new ground-floor footprint will be 97 m² and will accommodate a 17 m² kitchen (blue), a 7 m² office (green), a 54 m² baby room (yellow), with the remaining area allocated to an expanded toddlers' play and learning space (purple), shown in 2.1.2.



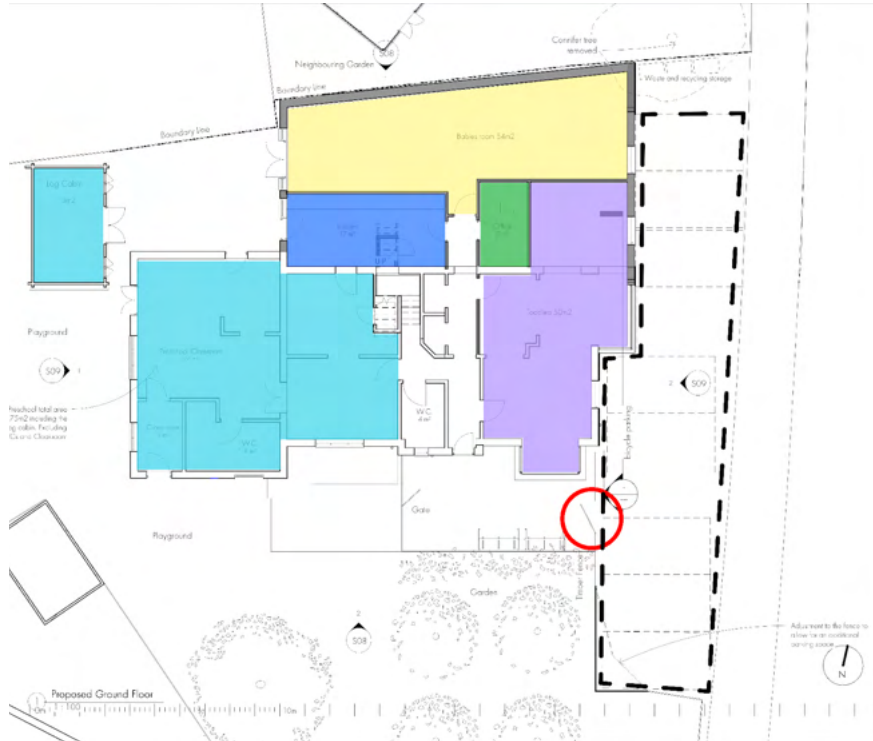
2.1.1 Existing garage space [red] with a footprint of 42m². The position of the log cabin [orange]. Unsuitable outdoor area for play/learning [pink]	2.1.2 Proposed new build [red outline] with a ground floor footprint of 97m². The log cabin [orange] is proposed to be repositioned to create a quality outdoor space in its former place.
	
2.1.3 Awkward outdoor spaces between the garage and the log cabin's current position	2.1.4 More awkward outdoor spaces between the garage [right] and the nursery [left]

The existing garage is single-skin brick and unsuitable for habitation. Adding insulation and the required wall, floor and roof build-ups to make it habitable would significantly reduce usable floor area and miss the opportunity to meet rising demand for nursery places. A new-build extension, constructed to current building standards, enables a full reconfiguration of nursery accommodation and increases space where it is most needed. Most of the new build will sit on outdoor areas within the site's curtilage that, because of their size, shape and location, are currently only fit for storage or circulation – highlighted in pink in 2.1.1, and in photos in 2.1.3 and 2.1.4.

Care has been taken to ensure that the proposed design respects the size and scale of the site and reduces the impact on the neighbouring dwellings – detailed later in 2.3 orientation and overlooking. In total, the proposed ground floor footprint will occupy 248m², an increase of 55m² from the original interior footprint.

2.2 Access and Layout

The proposed entrance will remain in the same position [red circle] and provision for more car parking and secure bicycle storage will also be implemented [black dashed line]. The extended footprint of the nursery, and the increase of internal space, would allow the nursery spaces to be clearly defined by age groups.



2.2.1 A revised internal layout allows for the segregation of spaces by age

The extended footprint of the nursery now allows for a continuous route for children and staff to move between internal spaces. Previously, there was a need to transition to the outdoors to get to the garage.

The outdoor area where the log cabin was originally positioned, will now be used as an outdoor space for children to play and allows for the expansion of learning space to the outdoors when the weather is suitable.

2.3 Orientation and Overlooking

The proposed extension [red] is located adjacent to a boundary line with a neighbouring dwelling. The boundary is formed with a combination of timber fencing and dense vegetation [blue dashed line]. No windows or openings are proposed in the

direction of the neighboring dwelling to ensure there is no loss of privacy or any chances of overlooking.

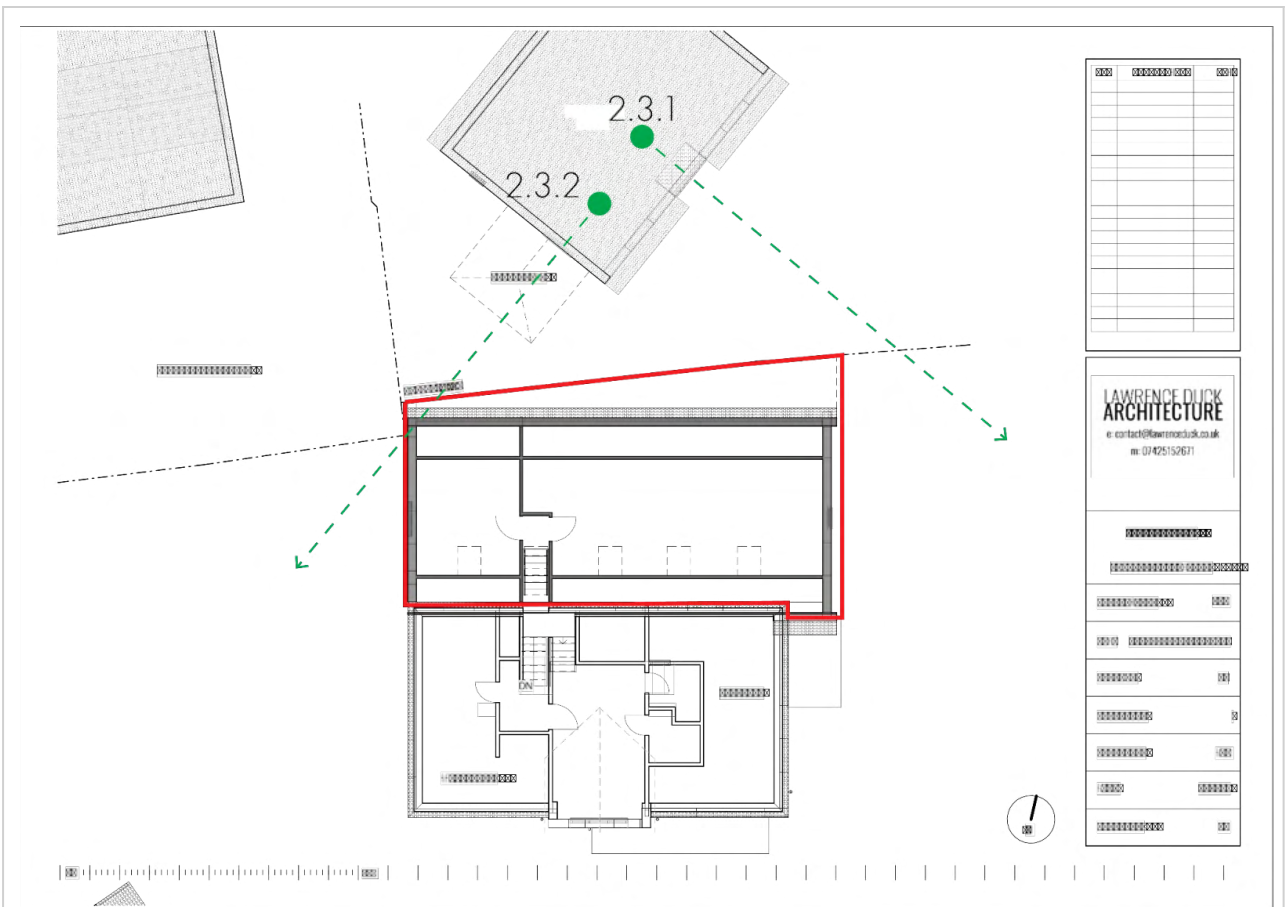
The neighbouring property's footprint is set at an angle to the nursery extension, so its first-floor windows on both the street-facing and side elevations do not have a significant direct line of sight into the nursery (see images 2.3.1 & 2.3.2).



2.3.1 View from the street-facing first floor window of the neighbouring property.



2.3.2 View from the side elevation first floor window of the neighbouring property.



2.3.3 First floor plan showing the orientation of the neighbouring property in conjunction with the nursery extension [red outline] The windows on the neighbouring properties at first floor level have very little view of the proposed development.



2.3.4 A view of the proposed development on site in relation to its surroundings

The roof of the proposed development has many advantages, as follows:

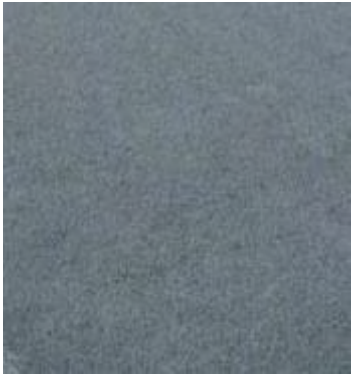
- Image 2.3.1 shows that the roof height of the proposed development now blocks the view of the car park resulting in less visual noise and disturbance to the neighbours
- Image 2.3.2 shows that the playground is almost entirely covered from view creating a better sense of privacy for the children playing in the playground
- The flat roof next to the boundary reduces the apparent mass and scale along the edge, preventing it from feeling overwhelming.

2.4 Materials

The nursery's street-facing elevation, covering both the existing building and the new extension, will be timber clad, providing a subtle, sympathetic update that clarifies the building's function while respecting the local character. Brick will remain the dominant finish on the other facades.

Flat roofs will be finished with a single-ply membrane; the extension roof will be tiled in clay to match the existing roof. Gutters and downpipes will be uPVC to match the current fittings and will be renewed where necessary. New timber fencing will be installed as required to match existing boundaries.

New windows and doors will be powder-coated aluminium for durability and a clean appearance. Overall, the proposed material palette delivers a coherent, contemporary character appropriate for a non-residential use within a residential area: recognisably a service building without unduly contrasting with its surroundings.

		
timber cladding	Single ply roof	Clay roof tiles
		
Brick finish	powder-coated aluminium frames	
2.4.1 Examples of the nursery's exterior construction materials		

3.0 Planning Considerations

3.1 NPPF (2024)

98. To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

- d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and

100. It is important that a sufficient choice of early years, school and post-16 places are available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:

- a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter early years, schools and post-16 facilities through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and

129. Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:

- c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;
- e) the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

131. The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

135. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

3.2 Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015

Core Policy 1 – Settlement Strategy

Supports development in or near settlements where it helps maintain sustainable communities and local services

Core Policy 2 – Delivery Strategy

Encourages provision of community facilities and infrastructure where need is identified; supports schemes that meet local needs (e.g., early years childcare).

Core Policy 3 – Infrastructure Requirements

Requires development to provide or contribute to necessary infrastructure and community facilities, including education and childcare capacity

Core Policy 57 – Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping

Supports proposals that respect local character and provide high-quality, accessible facilities, design-led extensions

3.3 Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2020 – 2038

Policy 1: Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy 15: Community Facilities

4.0 Conclusion

Careful consideration has been given to the design of the proposed development to ensure compliance with national and local planning policy. As demonstrated in Section 3.0, the proposal enhances local services and facilities for the community and wider neighbourhood. The scheme delivers a building of appropriate form, scale and high-quality design, retains adequate amenity space, and safeguards the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers with no significant adverse impacts. Overall, the development represents a sustainable, well-designed and justified improvement to community infrastructure that accords with the relevant planning objectives.

