

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Prepared by ACD Projects for:

Estcourt Vets
5-7 Estcourt St, Devizes, SN10 1LQ

Proposed change of use of an existing residential unit to ancillary veterinary staff and office accommodation, including the creation of an external access ramp and internal reconfiguration of the existing veterinary practice.



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1.0 Project Introduction

1.1 Application Description

This application is submitted on behalf of Estcourt Vets. The proposed development comprises the change of use of one of two existing residential units to ancillary staff and office accommodation in support of the existing veterinary surgery, together with internal reconfiguration of the existing premises and the installation of a new external access ramp.

1.2 Purpose of Design and Access Statement

The Design and Access Statement is submitted in support of the Full Planning Application, to provide additional detail on the development and to demonstrate that area and neighbouring properties will not be adversely affected by the proposed works. The document will also outline how the proposed facility will meet the current and future needs of Estcourt Vets.

Please note that all drawings shown within this application are for visual purposes only. For scaled drawings, please refer to the accompanying planning documents submitted with the application.

1.3 Estcourt Vets

Estcourt Vets are an independent veterinary practice that has been operating in Devises since 1897. Since first opening their doors, the practice has consistently provided high-quality care for pets within the local community and the wider surrounding area. The practice is well known for their personal and patient-centred approach, and many clients rely on the practice for general and preventative care. Estcourt Vets are also one of only two veterinary practices in the local area.

1.4 Design Consultants:

ACD Projects have been appointed by the practice to design this extension as they specialise in, and have a proven track record of, designing veterinary and animal welfare facilities that are fit for purpose and sympathetic to the local environment. For more information on ACD Projects' experience in this area, please see:

<https://www.acdprojects.com/>



2.0 Site Context

2.1 Site Location and Description

The existing practice is located at 5 Estcourt Street, Devizes, SN10 1LQ, positioned adjacent to the roundabout connecting Estcourt Street, Gains Lane and Southbroom Road. As shown in Figure 1, the site benefits from clear access from three surrounding streets. The surrounding area is predominantly commercial in character, with some residential accommodation above ground-floor units.

The site comprises multiple buildings, which together form the veterinary practice. The principal, client facing building accommodates reception, consultation and administrative areas, while additional clinical facilities are located within a separate building connected to the wider site. The principal building also contains two upper-floor flats, Flat 5 and Flat 7 (Use Class C3).

Flat 7 is currently tenanted by the veterinary practice, and the remaining flat (Flat 5) is currently vacant and underutilised, having historically been used intermittently to accommodate visiting veterinary (locum) staff. This residential unit, arranged over two floors, forms part of the wider building and is not configured as a fully independent dwelling, with its access and internal arrangement closely related to the rest of the property.

Estcourt Vets has long operated with consideration for its residential and commercial neighbours and the surrounding area. The proposed refurbishment will not affect this relationship, and the practice will continue to operate in a manner that is respectful of its surroundings.



Figure 1: Aerial View of Site (Source: Google Maps)

2.0 Site Context

2.2 Current Use

The site's current use is a veterinary practice (formerly Use Class D1, now Class E). The proposed development focuses on improving the health, welfare and comfort of animals, clients and staff. No change of use is proposed for the overall site; however, it is proposed to change the use of the existing first-floor flat (5 Estcourt Street, Use Class C3) to ancillary office accommodation associated with the veterinary practice. Flat 7 Estcourt Street will remain as a tenanted residential unit, with the veterinary practice acting as landlord.

2.3 Heritage Context

Estcourt Vets is located within the Devizes Conservation Area, as shown in Figure 2, and is a Grade II listed building.

The listing describes the building as an early C19 property of three storeys with basement, constructed in stone with a slate and pantile roof, and of particular townscape value due to its prominent position within Devizes.

The proposed works are limited to internal reconfiguration to support the ongoing use of the building as a veterinary practice, a use which has been long established. No alterations are proposed to the principal historic fabric or features of the building. A new external access ramp is proposed to improve inclusive access; however, this will be sensitively located so as not to be visible from the street and will not impact the character or appearance of the listed building or the wider Conservation Area.

A separate Heritage Assessment has been prepared in support of this application to provide further detail.

2.4 Flood Risk Assessment

The proposed development site is located within Flood Zone 1 (Low Probability) and as such, the development is at a low (less than 1 in 1000 years) risk of flooding from rivers or the sea.

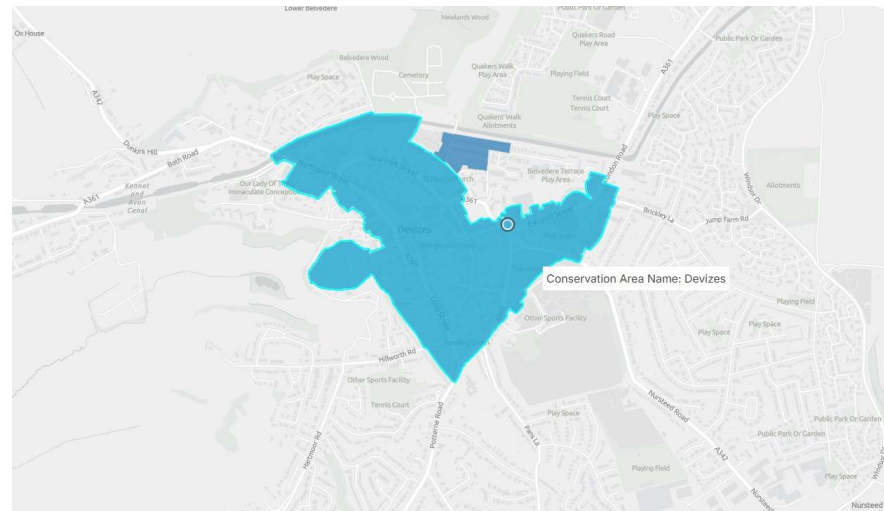


Figure 2: Devizes Conservation Area (Source: Heritage England)

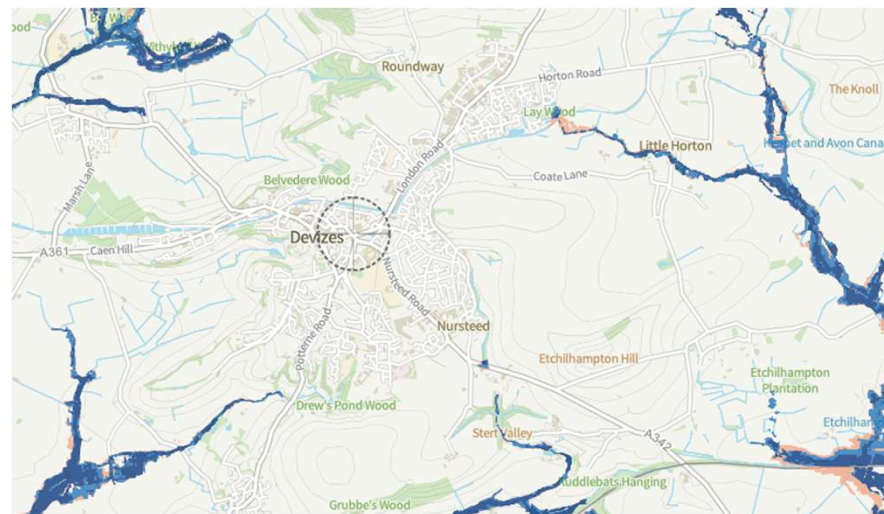


Figure 3: Flood Risk Map of Devizes showing application site within Flood Zone 1 (Source: www.gov.uk)

3.0 Site Photos



Figure 3: Front Elevation as Viewed from Estcourt Street



Figure 4: Main Reception Entrance (proposed dog patient entrance)



Figure 5: Existing Staff Entrance (Proposed Cat Patient Entrance and Location of New External Ramp)



Figures 6–8: Vacant Flat Proposed for Ancillary Use as Part of the Veterinary Practice

4.0 Development Brief

4.0 Existing Practice

The practice currently comprises three consultation rooms, with the majority of clinical functions located within a separate building on the same site. The building subject to this application predominantly accommodates client-facing areas, together with general staff facilities and ancillary office space, as shown on the existing floor plans.

At present, waiting and consultation areas are shared between cats and dogs, and the internal layout is relatively constrained, with limited separation of species and dedicated facilities.

4.1 Proposed Development

The proposed refurbishment comprises internal reconfiguration of the existing ground floor to improve animal welfare and overall operational efficiency. This includes the introduction of dedicated reception, consultation and waiting areas for cats, alongside existing facilities, which will be retained as a dedicated area for dogs. This development will enable clear separation between species, which is widely recognised within the veterinary sector as an effective means of reducing stress for animal patients. Additional improvements include the reorganisation of storage and support spaces, with the provision of a dedicated food dispensary for patients and improved storage facilities.

The existing vacant flat will be brought into use as ancillary office accommodation associated with the veterinary practice, allowing existing administrative functions to be relocated from the ground floor to facilitate the proposed ground-floor reconfiguration. The space will also provide staff facilities, including the reconfiguration of the existing domestic bathroom, which currently contains an unused bath, to form two W/Cs for the administrative and management teams.

To accommodate these changes, the proposed internal alterations will be achieved through the introduction of lightweight stud partitions. No internal works are proposed to the remaining floors.

The separation of cat and dog areas reflects current best practice within veterinary design, helping to significantly reduce stress for visiting animals during what can often be an anxious experience. The proposed layout will support the practice in achieving Cat Friendly Clinic status, a recognised accreditation within the veterinary sector awarded by International Cat Care (ICC).

4.2 Operation and Staffing

The proposed refurbishment will not affect the practice's current operating hours or staffing levels, as the development is intended solely to improve existing facilities for staff and enhance the level of service for existing clients.



Figure 10: Existing North Elevation



Figure 10: Proposed North Elevation showing Location of New External Ramp (circled in red)

4.5 Change of Use

The existing vacant residential flat (Flat 5) is proposed to be converted to ancillary staff and office accommodation associated with the veterinary practice, bringing it into the same Class E use as the remainder of the building and supporting the well-established use at ground-floor level. As outlined above, the change of use will allow the practice to relocate administrative functions from areas to be repurposed, improving both staff welfare and operational efficiency by providing a dedicated space for administrative tasks and staff breaks away from client-facing areas.

The nature and scale of activity associated with the ancillary staff and office space will be minor and contained within the existing building envelope. The proposal represents a logical and sustainable re-use of this space within the veterinary practice site, making more efficient use of the listed building while preserving its external appearance.

4.6 External Ramp

A new external access ramp is proposed to improve inclusive access to the practice for clients and patients. The ramp will be located to the side of the building, where it will be visually discreet and will not obstruct access into the site. Its form is intentionally simple and unobtrusive, constructed in concrete to provide a level threshold into the main building.

The design ensures safe, step-free access for users while minimising physical intervention in the historic fabric and maintaining the character and appearance of both the listed building and the surrounding Conservation Area.

5.0 Parking and Access

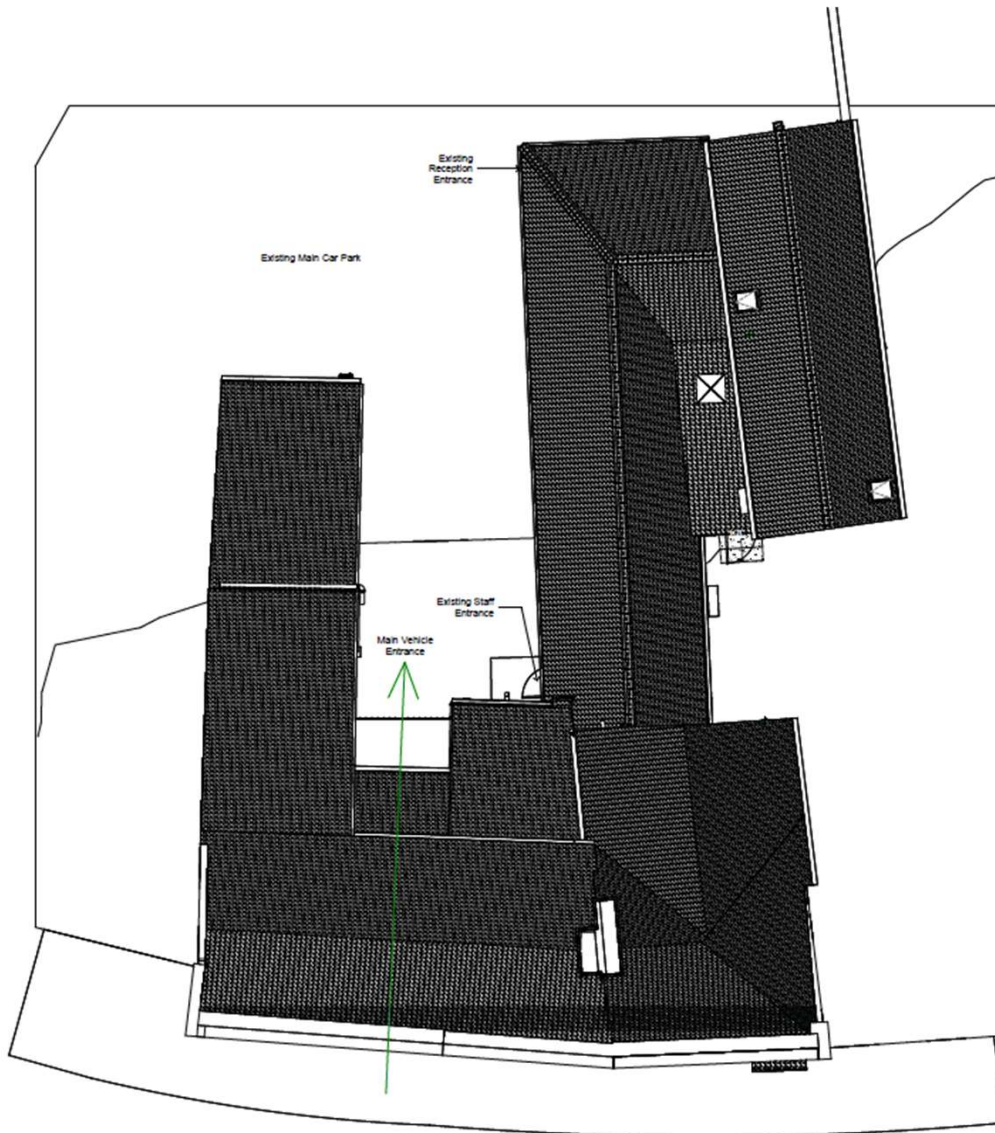


Figure 13: Existing Site Plan

6.5 Access to Site

Access to the site will remain from the main entrance off the roundabout. Client access to the building will be via separate entrances for dog and cat patients, utilising the existing main reception entrance and the existing side entrance, which will provide improved access for cat owners.

6.6 Parking

The proposed works are limited to internal alterations only and do not affect the existing parking arrangements.

No changes are proposed to the site layout or parking provision which will remain as currently existing.

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