

REPORT FOR WESTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	22 April 2026
Application Number	PL/2025/09634
Site Address	Old Stable House, 12A High Street, Melksham, SN12 6JU
Proposal	Erection of pair of hinged steel gates across private driveway by attachment to wall of adjacent / neighbouring building
Applicant	Andrew & Joyce Griffin
Town/Parish Council	Melksham CP
Electoral Division	Melksham South ED
Type of application	Listed Building Consent
Recommendation	Approve with Conditions
Case Officer	Andrew Thomas

REASON FOR THE APPLICATION BEING CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE

The application is brought before the Planning Committee by virtue of Part 3, Section D3, Paragraph 2.3 of the Scheme of Delegation, which states that private applications submitted by elected members or their close relatives, that are subject to material objections, must be referred to a committee to determine and not be determined by officers. In this instance, the application is submitted by Cllr Griffin and his wife to which the parish council and third-party objections have been received pursuant to heritage asset impacts of the aforementioned proposal. This will be discussed further in the following report.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to assess the proposed works in accordance with the statutory duty under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving the listed building, its setting, and any features of special architectural or historic interest.

As the proposal is an application for Listed Building Consent, the assessment is limited to the impact of the works on the significance and fabric of the listed building, with matters relating to public safety, amenity or other planning considerations addressed separately within the associated planning application (reference PL/2025/09766).

Having considered these factors, the report recommends that Listed Building Consent be approved subject to appropriate conditions.

2. MAIN ISSUES

The main issue in the consideration of this application is the impact of the gate upon the preservation of the listed building, its setting, and any features of special architectural and/or historic interest.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a narrow private alleyway leading directly off Melksham High Street within the Melksham Conservation Area, situated between two Grade II listed buildings at 12 and 14 High Street. The alleyway is not a public right of way and functions

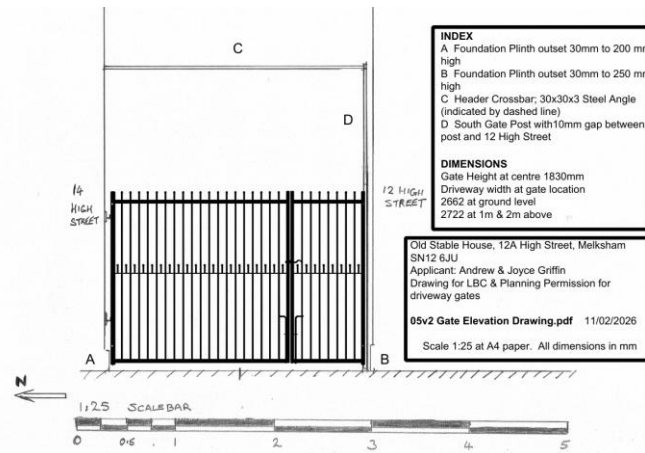
exclusively as a private access route to Old Stable House and its associated courtyard and buildings located to the rear of the High Street frontage. The immediate surroundings are characterised by historic commercial and residential properties typical of the town-centre conservation area, with the alleyway forming part of the historic curtilage arrangement associated with the former New Crown Inn stables. The site lies off a Grade C highway and sits within a tightly enclosed built context defined by the neighbouring listed structure

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

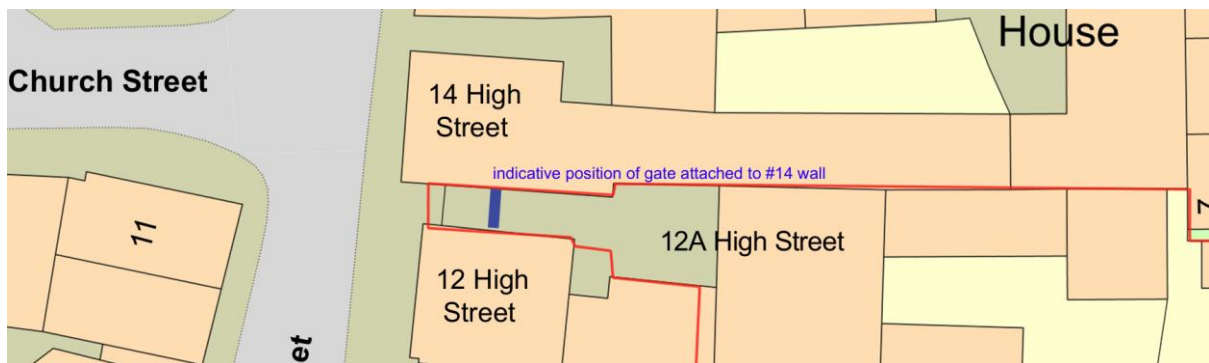
Reference No.	Proposal / Summary	Decision
W/86/00563/FUL	Change of use from domestic accommodation to multiple occupation (6 bed sits)	Approved
PL/2022/02903	Permanent change of use of 2 buildings from use class E (commercial, business and service) to class C3 (dwellinghouses). Construction of ground 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

5. PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks listed building consent for the installation of a new pair of metal driveway gates within the existing private alleyway access serving Old Stable House (12A High Street), set between Nos. 12 and 14 High Street. The gates are proposed as an asymmetric steel pair, inward-opening, 1.83 m in height, fixed partly to the listed building at No. 14 and partly to a new gate post adjacent to No. 12. The gate is intended to control access to the private driveway and courtyard to the rear. The works include associated hinge plates, fixings, and ground anchor points, with the gates positioned more than 5 m back from the High Street to ensure no obstruction to the public highway.



Proposed gate and application site



Proposed site plan

6. CONSULTATIONS

Melksham Town Council - Objects on the basis of the impact of the gate on the conservation area.

Conservation (Wiltshire Council) No objection, subject to a condition to ensure that the final finish of the gates is controlled so that their appearance remains appropriate to the listed buildings and conservation area.

7. REPRESENTATIONS

The application was publicised by letters posted to near neighbours, and a publicly displayed site notice. Three comments of objection have been received from two households citing the following points of concern:

The proposed lockable gates (across a narrow-shared access) would impede safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular movement, creating potential hazards where vehicles may be required to stop, wait or manoeuvre in constrained positions.

The gates would cause noise, disturbance and inconvenience for multiple users of the access, and increase the likelihood of conflict, and interfere with established rights of way relied upon by residents, businesses, deliveries and emergency services.

- The gates would harm the character and setting of the listed building and conservation area, noting that the gates and associated overhead structure would introduce intrusive and unjustified physical interventions into historic fabric.
- The development is motivated principally by a desire to restrict access rather than any legitimate planning or security need, particularly given the existence of other substantial security measures on site.

The application should be refused

8. PLANNING POLICY

Wiltshire Core Strategy

- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High-Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 58 Ensuring Conservation of the Historic Environment;

The Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 2020-2038 (August 2025)

- Policy 20 Locally Distinctive, High Quality Design;
- Policy 21 Local Heritage;

Emerging Policy – Wiltshire Local Plan Review

The examination of the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan has been paused and the weight to be afforded to any part of the emerging plan can be no more than very limited. A decision on how to proceed will be made by the Council in May 2026.

Other Relevant Policy and Guidance

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

9. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

9.1 Principle of Development

9.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 establishes that planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the adopted development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In line with this statutory duty, the proposal has been assessed against the policies of the Development Plan, including the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and the made Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan, which collectively provide the strategic framework for managing development in Melksham.

9.1.2 The acceptability of the proposal is subject to an assessment of the heritage impacts which are considered in the following section.

The proposal seeks listed building consent for the installation of a new pair of metal driveway gates within the existing private alleyway serving Old Stable House (12A High Street), situated within the Melksham Conservation Area and positioned between the Grade II listed buildings at No's 12 and 14 High Street, with the northern gate post proposed to connect

directly to the external elevation of No. 14. In considering works of this nature, Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the Local Planning Authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building, its setting, and any features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses.

9.2 Heritage Impacts

9.2.1 Adopted WCS Core Policy 57 requires new development to deliver high-quality design that positively reflects local character and distinctiveness, a principle reinforced by emerging Policy 98, which expects proposals to respond sensitively to landscape and townscape features such as scale, massing, materials, and building line. WCS Core Policy 58, together with emerging Policy 99, emphasises the need to conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings. These local policy requirements align with national guidance in the NPPF, including paragraphs 212 and 215, which require that great weight is given to the conservation of heritage assets and that any harm must be clearly justified, as well as Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which places a statutory duty on decision makers to pay special attention to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

9.2.2 The proposal would involve the installation of a modest steel gate finished in black and positioned several metres back from the High Street that officers consider would be visually recessive and an unobtrusive feature when viewed from the public realm. Its simple vertical-bar form and dark finish would ensure it would not draw the eye or disrupt the established character of the alleyway entrance. The design would also reflect elements already present in the immediate context, including a comparable metal gate on the opposite side of No. 14 High Street, as well as other dark-coated metal structures found along the High Street, such as fencing, lamp columns, and crossing infrastructure. These shared characteristics would assist in integrating this proposal into the streetscene.



Site Visit – Existing gate between 14 and 16, and application site

9.2.3 The applicants have outlined in their Design and Access statement that historic evidence supports that the alleyway was previously gated. Although historic photographs do appear to suggest that this entrance was formerly gated, the assessment does not rely on this precedent; the proposal is sufficiently minimal in bulk, open in form, and visually

recessive to have negligible effect on the area's wider character, even in the absence of historic continuity.



Streetview and circa 1880 appearing to show historic gated access.

9.2.4 The gate would be fixed to the southern external elevation of No. 14 High Street, a Grade II listed building, with the opposite side supported by a free-standing post positioned off No. 12 High Street, also listed. This arrangement avoids any physical intervention into the fabric of No. 12 and limits the attachment to No. 14 to only two modest hinge fixings. The section of elevation affected already exhibits signs of historic vehicle impacts, indicating that this part of the building has experienced minor alterations over time, and the extremely small extent of intervention being proposed would not meaningfully erode historic fabric or diminish the building's architectural significance.

9.2.5 The Council's conservation officer has confirmed that the simplified vertical-bar design proposed would be sympathetic to the setting, and that its impact on the conservation area and adjacent listed buildings would be neutral. Against standard heritage practice and the statutory and policy tests requiring special regard and great weight to the conservation of heritage assets, the limited and reversible physical impact falls well below the threshold associated with "*less than substantial harm.*"

9.2.6 For the reasons above, the design is considered visually appropriate, contextually coherent, and of minimal impact, while the heritage implications are extremely limited and assessed as being neutral by both professional judgement and statutory policy benchmarks. The proposal therefore complies with the relevant local and national design and heritage policies, and the development is considered acceptable.

10. CONCLUSION – the 'Planning Balance'

In assessing the proposal, the statutory duty under Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the Local Planning Authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building, its setting, and any features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses.

The proposed gates are modest in scale, visually recessive, and of a design that the Council's conservation officer concludes as having a neutral heritage impact.

On this basis, the works are judged not to harm the significance, setting, or fabric of the adjacent Grade II listed buildings, nor the wider character of the conservation area.

Other matters raised by third parties such as access management, private rights of way, or civil disputes between landowners fall outside the scope of Listed Building Consent and cannot reasonably be afforded weight in this decision. As no heritage harm has been

identified, the proposal accords with relevant heritage policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the emerging Local Plan, and Section 16 of the NPPF. Listed Building Consent is therefore considered appropriate, and approval is recommended.

RECOMMENDATION

That the application be GRANTED listed building consent subject to the following conditions –

1.The works for which Listed Building Consent is hereby granted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) 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:

01 Design and Access Statement (5 February 2026)

02 Location Plan (4 February 2026)

04 Gate Plan Drawing (5 February 2026)

05 Gate Elevation Drawing (11 February 2026)

09 Site Plan Proposed (4 February 2026)

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

3. The gate hereby approved shall be finished in a dark, non-reflective black coating as shown in the submitted application details and shall be retained in this finish for the lifetime of the development.

REASON: To ensure the appearance of the development remains appropriate to the character and setting of the adjacent listed buildings and the conservation area, in accordance with Core Policies 57 and 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the NPPF, and Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990