

APPLICATION FOR FULL-PLANNING PERMISSION

CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/01024
APPLICATION TYPE:	Removal/variation of conditions
SITE ADDRESS:	117, High Street, Royal Wootton Bassett, SN4 7AU
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans) of PL/2025/08061
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve with Conditions

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The application site is a red-brick two-storey building '117 High Street' in Royal Wootton Bassett, a market town which benefits from a made neighbourhood development plan (NDP). The site formally had planning use of commercial, business and service (Class E) however prior approval was granted for COU to 4No apartments with a further application for full planning permission granted for external alterations to the property. These works are currently being undertaken.

The site is wholly within the Wootton Bassett Conservation Area (CA) and whilst it is not listed, neighbouring '118, high street' is Grade II listed and there are other buildings near the site which have the same listed grade value.

There is public on-street parking, adjacent to the front (north-west) elevation, accessed from classified A-road 'high street' and an area of hardstanding to the rear (south-east) elevation which can be accessed via a public car park and appears to have been used for off-street parking to serve the building for some time.

The site, and wider area, are identified by the Environment Agency as being in Flood Zone 1, the lowest risk of flooding and is at little risk of surface water flooding

PROPOSAL

The application seeks to amend the external changes permitted under PL/2025/08061 approved by varying those plan details listed at condition No 2.

Specifically, the plan details enclosed seek to add a first-floor balcony (with French doors) to the rear of the building, serving the living room to flat No 3, and mirroring the sitting out space on the raised platform servicing flat No 1 below.2

The balcony is positioned at the end of the building and consists of a platform approximately 1.9m high with a depth of approximately 1.85m enclosed by railings. The rear elevation of flat 3 is shown amended to provide French doors onto the balcony

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
PL/2025/04639 - Prior Approval Part 3, Class MA: Commercial, business and service uses to dwellinghouses Decision - Prior Approval Granted Date: 23/7/2025 – Change of use from Commercial, Business and Service (Use Class E) to Dwellinghouses (Use Class C3) - converting the building from commercial office use (Use Class E) to 4No residential apartments under Schedule 2 Part 3, Class MA of the Town and Country P
PL/2025/08061 - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 12/2/2026 – External Alterations (amendment to PL/2025/04639)
PL/2025/08925 - Approval of details reserved by a condition Decision - Approve Date: 5/1/2026 – Discharge of condition 1 discharge of surface water of planning application PL/2025/04639 (Change of use from Commercial, Business and Service (Use Class E) to Dwellinghouses (Use Class C3) - converting the building from commercial office use (Use Class E

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Statutory Legislation:

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 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 58 Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment;
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development;

Neighbourhood Plan:

Royal Wootton Bassett Neighbourhood Plan (RWBNP)

- Policy 7: Design

Supplementary Planning Documents and other Guidance:

- Wiltshire Design Guide (adopted April 2024)

ISSUES

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

- The principle of development
- 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)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council: No objection

Council Conservation Officer: No objection however comment over impact of future development on site.

REPRESENTATIONS

One representation has been received from 118 High Street, Royal Wootton Bassett. Concerns raised are summarised below;

- Overlooking and loss of privacy
- Disturbance from noise and smells
- Setting of listed building
- Disturbance to visitors of funeral home
- Any privacy screen could be removed

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

The residential use of the building has already been established through the prior approval under Class MA (ref. PL/2025/04639) and planning permission PL/2025/08061 and no further consideration of the principal is required.

This application seeks to vary the approved plans of PL/2025/08061

Design, appearance and heritage

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.

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

Section 12 of the NPPF emphasises design that is:

- Visually attractive.
- Functionally effective.
- Contributes to the quality of the built 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. In particular:

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

The proposal involves the insertion of a French door in the rear elevation of the gable extension in place of the existing window. Plans also show the erection of an enclosed balcony 1.85m deep over the outdoor seating area for the flat below..

The rear elevation has been subject to substantial past alteration and contributes little to the building's significance. The building's architectural and historic interest lies principally in the surviving front block, which is unaffected by the proposal. The front elevation has been identified by the Conservation Officer as the element that contributes most strongly to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. As a whole, the rear elevations of this section of the High Street present as a mix of ad-hoc additions and alterations with enclosed parking areas.

Consequently, the proposed alterations and addition at the rear does not change the significance of this non-designated heritage asset. The Conservation Officer raises no objection, noting no heritage harm however does advise that further alterations may not be supported. (Full comments on file). The Town Council also offers no objection.

The proposed alterations are, sensitively located, and have no impact on the building's principal elevation or its contribution to the Conservation Area. The significance of the building and surrounding listed buildings are considered to be preserved, and no harm to the local character of the Conservation Area is identified. Accordingly, the proposal complies with CP57 and CP58 of the WCS, Policy 7 of the RWBNP as well as relevant paragraphs to the NPPF.

Amenity

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.

The adjoining neighbour at No. 118 High Street has raised concerns regarding potential loss of privacy arising from the proposed balcony and how this would result in overlooking of their private garden and cause disturbance through noise and smell.

The site is located within the centre of Calne where a level of intervisibility is to be expected. It is also relevant that there is already an established degree of overlooking from the existing first-floor access and stairs albeit this was conditioned under PL/2025/08061 to be used for access only. As such, the current arrangement already allows some overlooking towards the neighbouring garden at No. 118. This established and permitted position must be regarded as a material consideration of considerable weight (ie. the lawful baseline) when considering the proposals impact upon the amenity and living conditions of the neighbours.

The new balcony is positioned further away from the neighbours most private amenity space however views to the end of their garden would be possible as would to the access to the flats on the other side. The agent has confirmed their willingness to privacy screens to the side of the balcony to prevent this which can be secured in perpetuity via condition.

Concerns have also been raised as the potential for noise and disturbance both to the occupier of the adjacent property, and people utilising the nearby funeral home. The use as residential on the site has already been established and the flat below already has external amenity space. Furthermore, the rear of the property, and those adjacent have well utilised parking areas and are located in a town centre where there is an inevitable level of background noise and smells. It is not considered that the introduction of a balcony would introduce a use that would alter this significantly or to a harmful effect.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition (biodiversity gain condition) that development may not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan, if one is required in respect of this permission would be Wiltshire Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. For further information on exempt developments please refer to:

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because one or more of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements is considered to apply

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the proposed extension is considered acceptable in terms of principle, design and impact on the character and appearance of the area, and residential amenity. The proposals would accord with Core Policies 57, 58 and 61 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, Policy 7 of the Royal Wootton Bassett Neighbourhood Plan, and relevant paragraphs to the NPPF. Without any material considerations to indicate otherwise, the application is recommended for approval

RECOMMENDATION:

That Planning Permission be **GRANTED**, subject to conditions

1)The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning 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:

Proposed Floor Plans Y25-132-3

Sections and Elevations Y25-132-4

Received 13.02.26

Location Plan Y25-132-5

Received 17.04.26

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

3) a) *Prior to first occupation, details of any privacy screen walls to both sides of the balcony have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

b) *The screen walls and/or fences shall be erected in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of the dwelling(s) hereby permitted and shall be retained and maintained as such at all times thereafter.*

REASON: To prevent overlooking & loss of privacy to neighbouring property.

INFORMATIVE

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<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>

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