

APPLICATION FOR FULL-PLANNING PERMISSION CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/01035
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Avonside Enterprise Park, New Broughton Rd, Melksham , SN12 8AD
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Application for external alterations, part demolition of existing structures and hard and soft landscaping
RECOMMENDATION:	Grant planning permission

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The application site comprises the Avonside Enterprise Park which is a collection of buildings located on the northern bank of the River Avon. The “Avonside Chimney and distinctive roof-line” are Locally Valued Non-designated Heritage Assets based on the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2. The site has a historic utilitarian character provided by the industrial buildings, modern non-descript additions including a single storey structure to the west of the site and the intervening spaces dominated by hard standing.

The site is a designated as a Principal Employment Area but is located outside of the identified Town Centre.



Figure 1: Existing site plan showing proposed demolition in pink, and positions of Blocks C and D where proposed change of use would occur.

The local context is characterised by a range of building styles, the River Avon and the dominating road network from the A350 leading to the bridge over the River Avon and back again. Historic buildings include residential properties fronting the streets, but there are

notable commercial provisions including car sales, supermarket, pubs, the redundant Avon Tires site and then Avonside Enterprise Park. Immediately adjacent to the site is the Grade II listed “Bridge Over River Avon” and to the north-east the Grade II listed “Gate Piers, Gates and Railings to the front of Avon House”.

PROPOSAL

This is a proposal for external alterations, part demolition of existing structures and hard and soft landscaping. The works need to be read in conjunction with pending proposals for change of use which in totality would create 21 flats in the upper floors of Blocks C and D through a mixture of full planning approval (4 units) and a ‘light touch’ prior notification process (17 units). The prior approval process does not facilitate associated operational development and so separate planning approval is required for such works. This represents that application and also includes associated operational development connected to the 4 new flats created by the full planning application and wider regeneration works desired by the applicant.



Figure 2: Proposed site plan site reconfiguration including updated access, parking, and landscaping to facilitate a mixed use development.

Full details of the proposals are evident from the submitted plans and summarised within the submitted covering letter.

The proposal involves external alterations to buildings including Building 3 and Blocks A-G:

- Vertical extension to the site chimney through erection of a perforated metal cylindrical structure approximately 5 metres in height;
- Creation of new windows / rooflights with metal surrounds (black)
- New roof finishes with profile to match existing
- New glazed shopfronts with metal surrounds (black)
- Provision of roof mounted solar arrays

- New metal rainwater goods (black)
- New metal archway to north east access (black)
- PPC metal mesh and frame to screen MEP plant platforms (black)
- Rerouting ancillary drainage features internally.

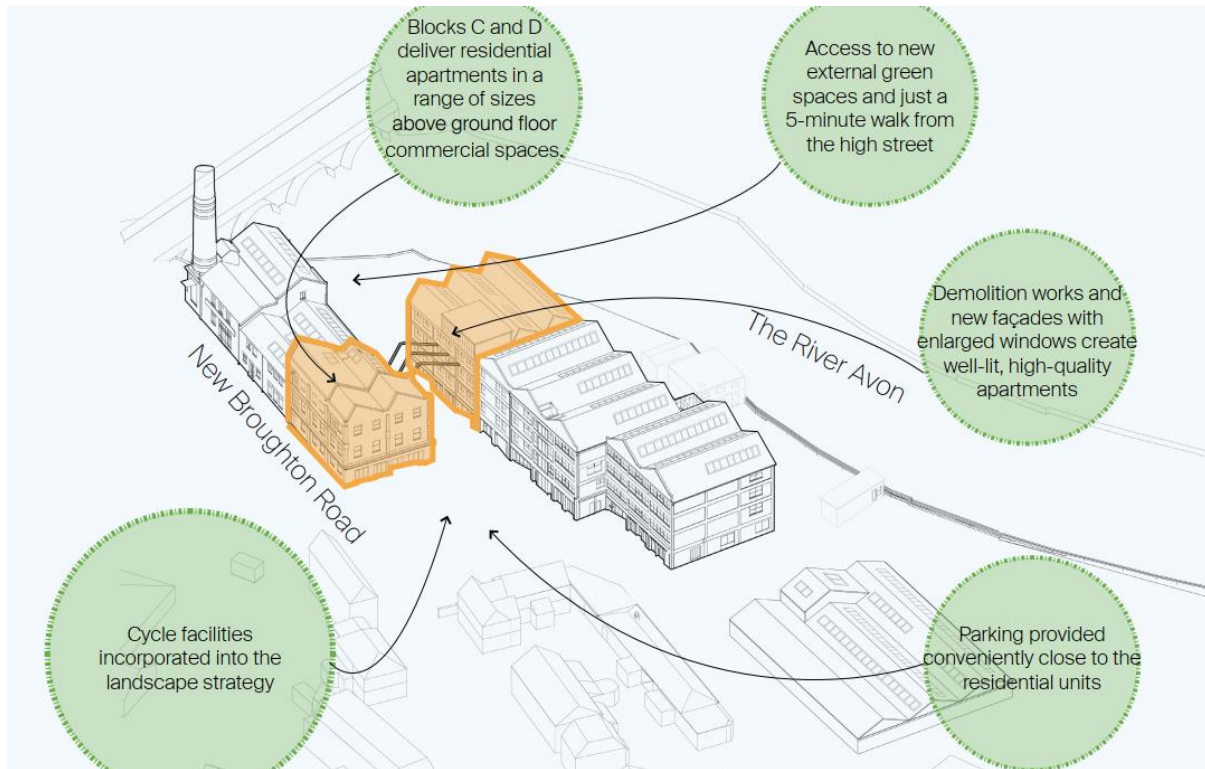


Figure 3: 3-D image showing the proposed renovated site and setting out the extent of built form where change of use is proposed to the upper floors only; retaining the rest of the site in existing uses.

The proposal also includes a rationalisation of the access, turning and car parking arrangements at the site. One access will be closed and a one-way system will be introduced to the site entering to the east and existing to the west. A pedestrian/ cycle access will be provided from the existing access to the far east of the site. 25 car parking spaces will be provided for the residential development of 21 units. These are located at the site frontage which will be landscaped. Commercial parking will be substantial and located to secondary areas of the site totalling circa 98 spaces.

The proposals make provision for bin storage and collection, cycle storage for residents, workers and visitors and plant storage too.

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
PL/2026/01033 - Consent to display an advertisement – Site-wide installation of various signage for wayfinding and commercial purposes
PL/2026/01035 - Full planning permission – Application for external alterations, part demolition of existing structures and hard and soft landscaping

PL/2026/01036 - Prior notification: Demolition Decision - Prior Approval Not Required Date: 12/3/2026 – Demolition of Block G and an existing free-standing building known as Scouts Hut / Scotts Gym at Avonside Enterprise Park, Melksham
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PL/2026/01061 - Prior Approval Part 3, Class MA: Commercial, business and service uses to dwellinghouses – Application for prior approval under Class MA for the proposed change of use from Class E (commercial) to Class C3 (residential) to provide 17 units

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

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 1 Settlement Strategy;
- Core Policy 2 Delivery Strategy;
- Core Policy 3 Infrastructure Requirements;
- Core Policy 15 Spatial Strategy Melksham Community Area
- Core Policy 35 Existing Employment Land
- Core Policy 41 Sustainable Construction and Low-Carbon Energy;
- Core Policy 45 Meeting Wiltshire's Housing Needs;
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Core Policy 51 Landscape
- Core Policy 52 Green Infrastructure
- Core Policy 55 Air Quality;
- Core Policy 56 Contaminated Land;
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 58 Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment;
- Core Policy 60 Sustainable Transport;
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development;
- Core Policy 62 Development Impacts on the Transport Network;
- Core Policy 64 Demand Management
- Core Policy 67 Flood Risk;
- Core Policy 68 Water Resources;

The 'saved' policies of the adopted *West Wiltshire District Plan 1st Alteration (WWDP)*, with particular regard to:

- H16 Flat Conversions
- TC1 Upper Floor Uses in Town Centres
- U1a Foul Water Disposal

The made *Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 (JMNP2)*, with particular regard to:

- Policy 1: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy 3: Flood Risk and Natural Flood Management
- Policy 5: Pre-application Community Engagement
- Policy 10: Employment Sites
- Policy 11: Sustainable Transport and Active Travel
- Policy 12: Green and Blue Infrastructure
- Policy 13: Biodiversity
- Policy 17: Tree and Hedgerows
- Policy 18: Landscape Character
- Policy 20: Locally Distinctive, High Quality Design
- Policy 21: Local Heritage
- Priority Statement 4: Progressing Town Centre Master Plan Area Regeneration

Statutory Legislation:

Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

National Planning Policy:

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

Supplementary Planning Documents and other Guidance:

- Wiltshire Design Guide (adopted April 2024)
- Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026, adopted 2015 - including the Car Parking Strategy and Cycling Strategy, adopted 2015
- Wiltshire Council's Waste Core Strategy, adopted July 2009
- Wiltshire Council's Waste Storage and Collection: Guidance for Developers Supplementary Planning Document, January 2017
- A Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Wiltshire: Wiltshire's Natural Environment Plan 2022-2030
- Wiltshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
 - Active travel infrastructure design standards 2022
 - Active travel parking standards and design guide 2022
- LTN1/20 – Cycle Infrastructure Design (July 2020)
- Air Quality SPD (July 2023)
- Melksham Town Centre Masterplan – Final Report July 2023.

Draft Wiltshire Local Plan Policies

- Policy 1: Settlement Strategy
- Policy 2: Delivery Strategy
- Policy 3: Reserve sites and broad locations for growth
- Policy 4: Addressing climate change
- Policy 5: Securing infrastructure provision from new development
- Policies 6-20: Chippenham Area Strategy
- Policies 21- 43: Salisbury Area Strategy

- Policies 44- 51: Swindon Area Strategy
- Policies 52 – 63: Trowbridge Area Strategy
- Policies 64 – 75: Economic, tourism, retail and transport
- Policies 76 – 84: Social, housing, community, public open space and wellbeing
- Policies 85 – 101: Sustainability, ecology, water and landscape, heritage, air quality

The above are currently the strategic policies within the emerging Local Plan. 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.

ISSUES

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

- Design and heritage considerations
- Public protection matters including pollution control and contaminated land
- Flood risks
- Accessibility and Highway Safety
- Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain
- Any other material considerations

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WC Highways: No objection subject to condition to secure proposed details of access, turning and parking.

WC Arboricultural: No comment

WC Conservation: No comments received.

WC Public Protection: No comments received.

WC Ecology: No objection subject to conditions on construction, lighting and provision of biodiversity enhancements.

WC Drainage: Holding objection – seeking further information to demonstrate that post-development discharge rates from brownfield sites are restricted, as far as reasonably practicable, to greenfield runoff rates.

Environment Agency: No objection subject to conditions to secure a Demolition and Construction Environmental Management Plan and informative regarding Environmental Permits, Flood Risk Activity Permit and Flood Risk.

Melksham Town Council: No objection.

“Melksham Town Council has considered the applications en-bloc. On the understanding that existing businesses would not be affected and would continue to trade, Melksham Town Council feel the proposals would be of benefit to the development of the area.”

“Additionally to previous comments these applications aligns with the Melksham Town Centre Masterplan which includes

- Section 3.3 – “Walkable Neighbourhoods”
- Section 5 - “To make the town of Melksham and the parish of Melksham Without great places to live, to work, to play and to visit
- Section 5.1 - “A connected town centre and healthy, active community”
- Section 5.2 - “A vibrant and diverse town centre.”

Melksham Without Parish Council: Comment.

“Melksham Without Parish Council request that regard is taken of Priority Statement 4 (Progressing Town Centre Master Plan Area Regeneration) in the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 and the Melksham Town Centre Master Plan Report as they include the Avonside Enterprise Park.”

REPRESENTATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), the application was publicised by way of:

- Letters to neighbouring property;
- A site notice displayed near the site; and
- An advertisement placed in the local press.

These methods were used to inform interested parties and provide a period of 21 days for comments to be submitted.

Below is a summary of the representations received during the consultation period. Only material planning considerations have been taken into account in the assessment of this application. Non-material issues, such as property values or private legal disputes, cannot be considered in the determination process.

1 letter received in support of the proposals from a business owner at the site.

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.

Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

Policy Context

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.

Policy 20: Locally Distinctive, High Quality Design sets out that proposals should contribute positively to the conservation, enhancement and extension of the quality and local distinctiveness of the neighbourhood area. Development should respond positively to the history and character of the area in which the site is located. Major development requires demonstrable complementary development through a design statement.

Section 12 of the NPPF emphasises design that is:

- Visually attractive.
- Functionally effective.
- Contributes to the quality of the built environment.

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

Building for a Healthy Life Framework promotes healthy, inclusive, and sustainable places. The document encourages:

- Walkability.
- Access to green space.
- Active design principles for well-being.

Assessment

The application has been submitted with a Design Note that sets the proposed development into context and demonstrates a design approach that would be complementary and extend the positive characteristics of the site. The proposals show a sympathetic but contemporary approach to reimagining the wider site and providing a privately owned space that would be welcoming as a place to work, visit as a customer to those commercial uses; and live as a future resident to the upper floors.

The proposal would provide a vertical extension to the significantly truncated chimney at the site. This would be internally illuminated and provide a ghostly echo of the former glory of the site in its industrial dairy processing heyday. Although modern in its choice of materials and design it would make a positive statement of how the site is evolving to find an optimum viable place in the modern world and current townscape.

The proposals would make alterations to the roof, most notably through demolition between Blocks C and D. However, the plans show a reflection of the lost roof form through the use of asymmetrical steels which provide a legible evolution of the site for future generations whilst facilitating a floorplate that can accommodate a reasonable level of amenity for future residential and commercial users. These also add interest to the site.

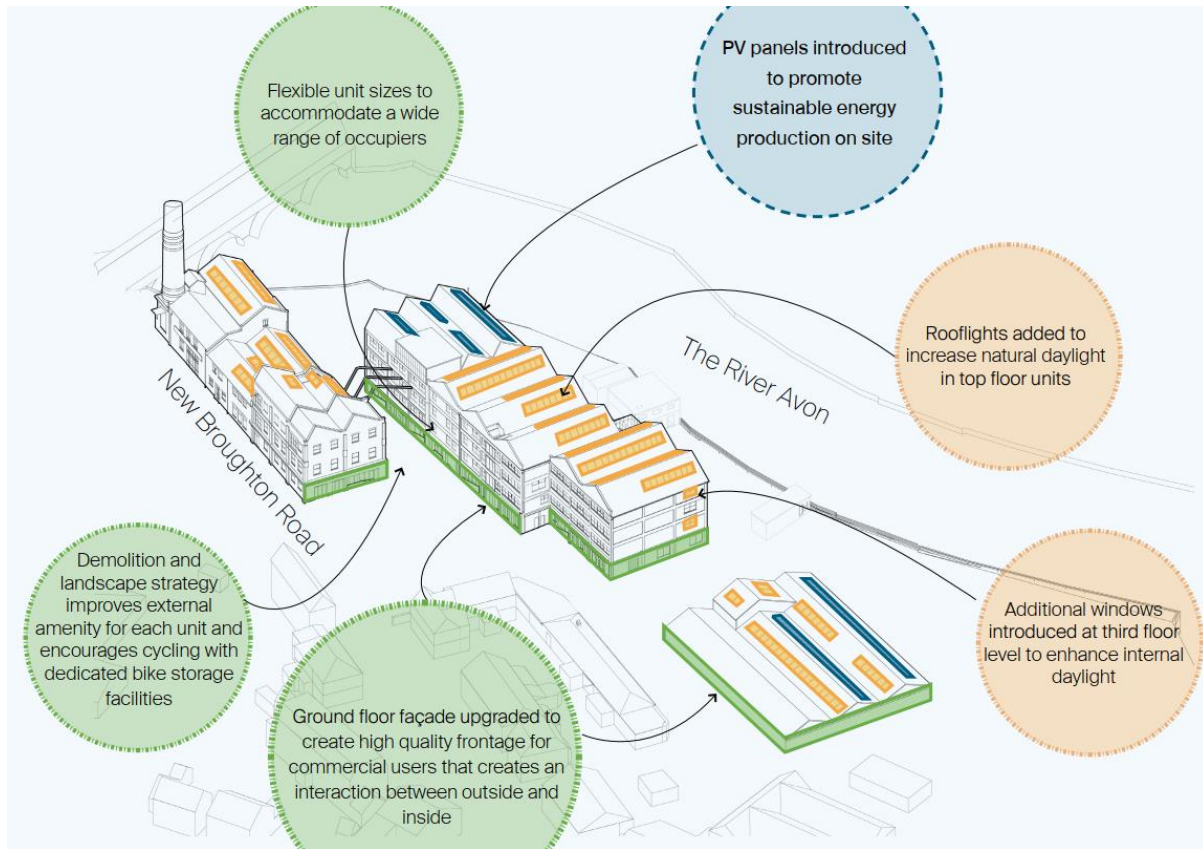


Figure 4: Extract from the Design Note showing the opening up of the site, ground floor commercial user upgrades, roof alterations and proposed asymmetrical steels between buildings C and D.

The proposals also detail the use of new rooflights which will facilitate more natural light to the floor below, improving the usability of the large floorplates here. Furthermore, the plans show the use of roof mounted solar panels providing a valuable renewable energy generating option at the site, which is a natural transition from the 19th to the 21st century.

The proposals detail making good of surfaces with materials to match the existing; and provision of contemporary material choices for new shop fronts, windows and rooflights which still respect the scale and proportions of the building fenestration and the mass of the buildings. The consistent application of materials provides a harmonious final impression of the development from the various key viewpoints in the street scene.

The proposals to provide a perforated metal screen to the external metal staircases would provide a visual enhancement, a contemporary edge and also an opportunity to enhance wayfinding and legibility within and out with the site.

The proposal also incorporates a standardisation of shopfronts throughout the site. This provides a pleasing level of consistency supporting the creation of a new character area of historic Victorian development meeting modern contemporary features.

In addition the proposals have a comprehensive and soft and hard landscaping scheme which will increase the amount of trees and planting on site. This will have consequent benefits in terms of ecology, climate change, drainage and visual amenity.



Figure 5: Extract from the Design Note showing the new streetscape punctuated with street trees; new shopfronts and public spaces for permeability and informal congregation, which will facilitate growth of community.

The rationalisation of the car parking provision will also improve the design of the site providing a clear route for vehicles which will benefit walking and cycling around the site and wider area. The proposals detail cycle storage space that is secure and covered for future residents and the commercial uses too in a stand alone structure near the river. The plans show more flexible and convenient stands for short-term visitors to the site.

In terms of demolition it is noted that this has been subject to prior approval already, but in short it is considered to offer an opportunity to rationalise the built form footprint and improve the green infrastructure without compromising necessary car parking. The loss of the built form poses no significant concerns in design terms.

The proposals have not drawn any objection.

Conclusion

Overall, the proposed changes taken cumulatively would be a significant enhancement over and above the existing. The investment required is hoped to attract more use within the building which would be positive for vitality and viability in this fringe of town centre location. This ought to also provide opportunity for more investment and then in turn on-going maintenance. Such maintenance would be beneficial for raising the standards in the built environment in the area and encourage investment at other nearby sites too. The proposals would accord with CP57 and Policy 20 of the development plan, as well as wider objectives/priorities set out within the JMNP2, Wiltshire Design Guide and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Impact on Heritage Assets

Policy Context

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 66 requires that

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

Paragraph 208 requires LPAs should “avoid or minimise any conflict” between the heritage asset’s conservation (which includes achieving its optimum viable use) and any aspect of a proposal.

Paragraph 210 requires local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable new uses and of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraphs 212 requires “great weight” to be given to an asset’s conservation “irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.”

Paragraph 213 advises that harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should require “clear and convincing justification”.

The 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 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.

The Council’s Core Strategy CP 57: Ensuring high quality design requires a high quality of design in all new developments. The policy requires applicants to “demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through (amongst other things) responding to the value of the natural and historic environment and being sympathetic to and conserving historic buildings and landscapes. Development is required to respond positively to the existing in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting.

Policy 21 of the JMNP identifies the chimney and roof of the building to be a Locally Valued Non-Designated Heritage Asset and as such regard should be had to the significance of the heritage asset, its most distinctive and important features, elements of its setting and immediate surrounds that contribute to its significance and fully take into account heritage issues within the submission.

Assessment

The application has been submitted with a Design Note that sets the proposed development into the heritage context of the site and wider area and then demonstrates how the proposal will respond positively to this.

The site is one that has clearly adapted to the prevailing needs at any given time but has been in decline since its heyday use as a dairy processing facility. Key to that use would have been

the chimney on the north east corner of the site. As evident from the images below this has been significantly truncated and so proposals to make a contemporary addition to this offers a positive change and an attempt to make more of a feature of this structure without any further loss of historic material.



Figure 6: Image of the chimney at the site, potentially from the late 19th century.



Figure 7: Extract from the Design Note illustrating the site changes including demolition and landscaping, but also the proposed vertical chimney extension.

As set out above the proposed changes to the site, including the alterations to the chimney and roof are considered to be sympathetic to the site and its industrial heritage. These are the key features of this non-designated heritage asset as identified within the JMNP2.

The other alterations to the site including the alterations to fenestration (including shop fronts), and changes to the hard and soft landscaping across the site are considered to be secondary

to the significance of the NDHA and in any event are considered to provide overall an enhancement to the character and appearance of the site and its contribution to the surrounding context.

That surrounding context includes the Grade II listed bridge over the River Avon and its setting. The changes are considered to represent a sympathetic evolution of a Victorian site to try and find a reasonable optimum viable use of the asset to ensure it is well maintained and doesn't fall into a state of disrepair, contributes positively to the character of the area and adds to the vitality of Melksham. It achieves this, including using a brutalist style I-beam arch over the access immediately adjacent to the listed bridge. Overall, the significance of the bridge would not be impacted, and no harm would occur to it and its setting.

Conclusion

Overall, it is concluded that the proposal would be likely to have a positive impact on the character and appearance of the area. The alterations to the most significant elements of the built form would be sympathetic with the industrial heritage reflected through the roof form and chimney at the site. The use of exposed steels to reflect the historic link between blocks C and D would be positive and the introduction of solar PV and more rooflights would not alter the form and character of the roofs. The contemporary vertical chimney extension, including through its illumination would offer an indication of the former scale and significance of what is currently a significantly truncated and diminished structure.

The proposal would not harm any designated or non-designated heritage assets and accord with the development plan.

Amenity

Policy Context

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.

These policies guide the assessment of amenity impacts, which will be considered in detail under the below headings.

This is largely a matter for consideration as part of the proposed change of use applications. However, this application deals with the operational development that is required in order to facilitate the changes.

Assessment

The proposal would demolish a number of structures and most relevant in terms of amenity is the area between Blocks C and D. This creates a new internal street space that is pedestrianised and positive. It does mean that the new fenestration facing into this street does so with intervisibility that is around 10 metres. However, this is considered to be acceptable in a fringe of centre location and on a brownfield site. Future residents would be aware of the relationship prior to occupying the units.



Figure 8: The internal pedestrian space created by demolition between Blocks C and D with steels retained to reflect the historic roofscape, new windows created to the internal elevations which are sympathetic to the existing fenestration whilst retaining a circa 10 metre intervisibility between the new residential units.

In terms of noise this has been addressed through the parallel change of use applications which would be conditioned in order to address recommendations made in the supporting information.

This proposal details the provision of adequate bin storage and collection.

Conclusion

The proposed operational development would ensure that a suitable level of amenity is generated at the site for future occupiers having regard to key matters such as noise, outlook, light and odours. As such, the proposal would comply with the development plan.

Highways Impacts and Parking

Policy Context

Transport implications are a key factor in assessing planning applications, especially for larger developments. Proposals must demonstrate:

- Safe and suitable access for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and those with mobility impairments.
- No severe residual impacts on the surrounding highway network.
- Promotion of sustainable travel, reducing reliance on private vehicles.
- Adequate parking and cycle provision, in line with adopted standards.
- Protection and enhancement of public rights of way and active travel routes.

Relevant policies include Core Policies 60–64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, supported by the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan, Car Parking Strategy, and Cycling Strategy. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and LTN 1/20 (DfT) provide further design guidance for active travel infrastructure.

Proposals must also ensure safe access for refuse collection vehicles and comply with the Wiltshire Council Waste Storage and Collection SPD (2017).

Assessment

The proposal details the alteration of the existing four access points at the site. They are all along the main road that runs between the bridge over the River Avon and the A350 in a westerly direction only.

To the east corner the existing access would be downgraded for pedestrian and cycle use only under a new archway that helps to indicate its secondary significance. The existing car park further to the west currently has 2 access points and no definition or landscaping. The proposal would rationalise this by retaining only 1 access point which would be marked internally as no exit. Then to the west end of the site the access would be retained but as an exit only. These changes would be an enhancement to highway safety at this point.

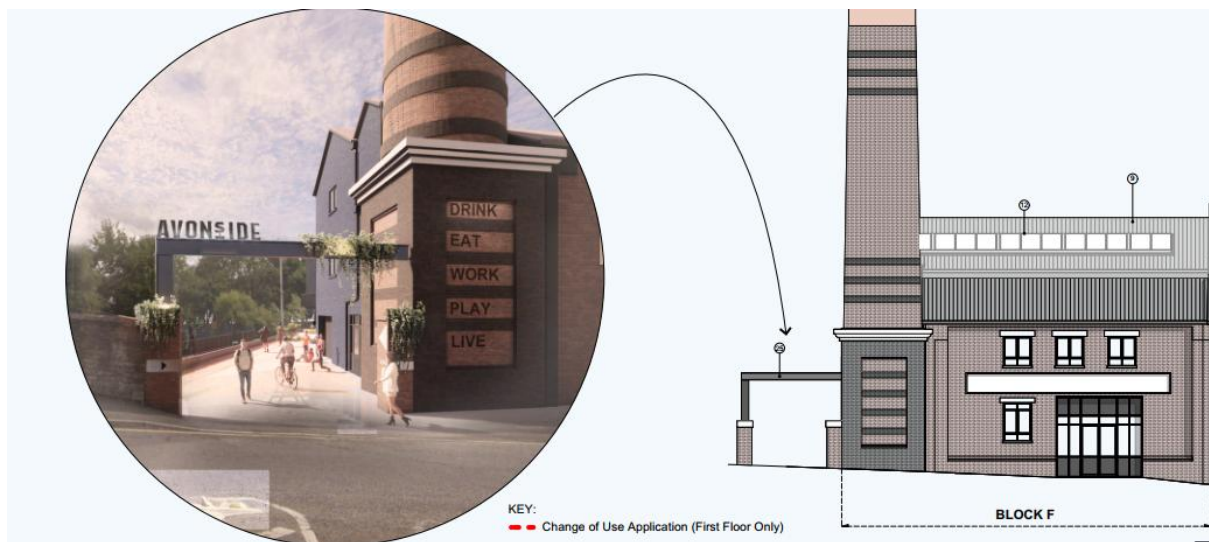


Figure 9: Extract from the Design Note illustrating the changes to the NE access point with a new industrial style I-beam arch, advertising to promote vitality at the site. This is intended to be a pedestrian and cycle site access.

Internally the proposals demonstrate a revised car parking strategy with areas allocated for the residential uses and the commercial uses, totalling over 100 vehicular spaces overall. The more prominent spaces would be landscaped to achieve betterment in terms of visual, drainage, overheating and biodiversity. The level of car parking and the vehicle tracking details are all suitable based on the expert highway officer opinion.

It is noted that highway officers have sought to condition that the proposals are provided. However, the approved plans condition goes some way to ensuring this aim. It is not reasonable or necessary to require this to be completed because the existing arrangements are accommodating commercial uses at the site and could equally accommodate the mix of uses anticipated through the parallel change of use applications.



Figure 10: Extract from the Design Note illustrating the proposed alterations to the site entrance from the existing open expanse of hard standing with 2 access points, rationalised to a contained, landscaped space with an access point.



Figure 11: Extract from the Design Note showing the vehicular and cycle parking locations. Yellow are the residential parking spaces and green for business uses. The orange dot is covered and secure residents cycle storage. Turquoise is similar for the business users. Purple dots are for Sheffield stands.

The proposals detail suitable secure and covered cycle parking that would be an enhancement over the existing and that would promote a modal shift. These are positive and welcomed. Conditions to secure this are not strictly necessary.

Conclusion

The proposals would represent an enhancement to the existing access, parking and turning at the site for vehicular traffic and offer opportunities to support a modal shift towards active travel. As such, in highway terms the proposal is considered to be policy compliant without conditions.

Ecology and Biodiversity

Policy Context

The ecological impact of development is a key planning consideration, especially for larger schemes. Proposals must assess and address potential effects on:

- Protected species
- Priority habitats
- Ecological networks
- Green and blue infrastructure

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to:

- Avoid harm to ecological assets.
- Deliver measurable Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), in line with the Environment Act 2021.
- Support habitat restoration and connectivity.
- Integrate biodiversity into site design.

The Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy (2022–2030) promotes nature recovery, ecosystem services, and habitat connectivity through development.

Unless exempt, National policy requires a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for major developments, demonstrated via:

- Biodiversity Metric calculations
- Ecological assessments (e.g. PEAs, Phase 1 surveys, protected species surveys)

Policy 13 of the JMNP sets out that development proposals should deliver at least 10% improvement in biodiversity value within and where appropriate beyond the site to deliver tangible benefits. Furthermore, where appropriate development proposals should demonstrate sensitive responses to nature conservation sites.

Policy 17 seeks to increase tree cover.

Assessment

The application has been submitted with an ecological assessment and this has been subject to review and consultation with technical experts in ecology. They raise no objection subject to the appropriate use of conditions.

It has to be recognised that the demolition has been approved through a prior approval process, and this application simply replicates what has already been proposed. As such, there is limited control here through the planning process in relation to this demolition. For the avoidance of doubt, it is considered reasonable here to impose the recommended compliance

condition in relation to the applicant's own ecology consultants recommendation to carry out demolition of "Scott's Gym" building under supervision. This is achieved through the approved plans.

The site is known to support commuting and foraging routes for various bat species and as such it is considered reasonable to have special regard to lighting issues at the site. It has to be recognised that the site is in an existing commercial use and the aim ultimately is to ensure that vacant space is better utilised through making the site mixed use. This application deals with operational development and landscaping to help deliver on these aims. The only additional lighting proposed is associated with the chimney and the provision of new windows.

The new windows are proposed away from the river corridor. The new rooflights would create some potential for additional light spill, as would the illumination of the chimney. However, subject to an appropriate lighting condition this can be controlled and managed to avoid harm to bats (and indeed other light sensitive ecology).

It must also be acknowledged that the proposals include landscaping including the planting of a number of street trees. The site currently has a utilitarian appearance with large areas of unabated hard surfaces and buildings. In this context the proposals would offer a significant ecological betterment over the existing situation. CP50 does not require ecological enhancement and so the condition requiring bird and bat boxes has been amended to have wider scope as an informative only.

The applicant has set out that the proposals would fall under the de minimis exemption under BNG. There is no reason to reach a different conclusion here and in any event the proposal would deliver enhancements which meets the policy objective.

During the construction period there is the potential for the natural environment to be impacted and as such there is a need for a construction environmental management plan. Some details have been provided regarding the demolition phase in the associated prior approval for demolition. However, it is considered that including demolition into the CEMP would provide a greater degree of flexibility for the application. The applicant has agreed to this approach.

Conclusion

The proposal has raised a no objection response from ecology colleagues and it is considered that overall it would provide an enhancement to ecology interests subject to appropriate controls

Flood Risk and Drainage

Policy Context

Core Policy 67 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and NPPF paragraphs 170–182 require:

- Avoidance of increased flood risk.
- Use of appropriate mitigation measures.
- Application of the sequential and exception tests for developments in Flood Zones 2 or 3.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are required for all major developments and must:

- Manage runoff near its source.

- Improve water quality.
- Support biodiversity and amenity.
- Be integrated into the site layout and green infrastructure.

Assessment

The proposed development is within an area of high flood risk. However, the proposals would reduce the amount of built form on the site and as such provide an increase in flood plain capacity overall despite some minor additions like a free-standing bike storage hub. The proposal would increase the site permeability supporting enhanced infiltration which would be beneficial in storm events. Otherwise, the proposal seeks to retain the existing on site drainage strategy.

It is noted that the Environment Agency raise no objection to the proposals. However, drainage colleagues in their role as the Lead Local Flood Authority have raised a holding objection setting out that their view that there is “significant scope” on this site to further reduce discharge rates and “as far as reasonably practicable” post development discharge rates on brownfield sites should be restricted to a greenfield run-off rate. They set out that they will not accept that SuDS cannot be delivered on the basis of cost or maintenance considerations. Furthermore, they require the applicant to demonstrate that the SuDS have been incorporated to maximise multi-functional benefits.



Figure 12: Extract from the Design Note illustrating the provision of soft landscaping and mature street trees which will be beneficial for a range of reasons including drainage, shade, biodiversity and visual amenity, supporting a community that can adapt to a changing climate.

These technical expert views of the EA and LLFA differ but have been given careful consideration. The scale and nature of the proposed brownfield redevelopment are actually quite minor and seek to make use of the existing built form. They are not about a comprehensive redevelopment which would naturally reveal significant opportunities for improving site drainage. The proposed improvements to site permeability are considered to be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposals. They will result in modest betterment

and they will deliver multifunctional benefits in terms of biodiversity, amenity and climate change. As such, no further information is considered necessary here and as such there is no reasonable reason to withhold planning approval. Strictly there is no reasonable reason to seek more information by condition either. Furthermore, even if further information were necessary to justify the proposal there are clear benefits to this scheme which would outweigh any lack of information here.

Conclusion

The proposed development is considered to have a broadly neutral impact in terms of flood risk matters with potential for slightly increased flood storage capacity generated and also an increase in site permeability generated. Whilst the drainage team's holding objection is noted, no objection from the EA has been received and in the circumstances of this specific case the requested information is not considered to reflect the scale and nature of the proposals which would be a betterment compared to the existing. As such, the proposals are considered to be acceptable in drainage and flood risk terms.

Environmental Considerations (Noise, Air Quality, Contaminated Land, etc.)

Policy Context

Core Policies 55 and 56 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy require:

- Development proposals to avoid unacceptable environmental impacts.
- To provide appropriate mitigation where risks are identified.

The NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) reinforce this by stating that proposals should:

- Prevent development that contributes to or is exposed to unacceptable pollution.
- Ensure developer responsibility for safe development on contaminated land.

Wiltshire Council's Air Quality SPD (2023) provides detailed guidance, especially near Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and encourages mitigation such as:

- EV charging infrastructure
- Green buffers
- Sustainable transport options

Assessment

The wider applications have been submitted with a contaminated land report. It is considered that the site is likely to have been exposed to potential contamination given its historic employment uses since the Victorian era. It is noted that the Environment Agency have not raised the matter of contamination and that no comments have been received from public protection colleagues.

However, this is the application to deliver the operational development necessary in order to make change of use on the site for 21 apartments acceptable. The submitted information indicates no issues with changing the use of the upper floors to residential and potential contamination. However, it does indicate that if significant ground works or landscaping were being proposed then further assessment for contamination is recommended. In light of this, and given the nature of the works and lack of further assessment it is considered that a condition is required more information is necessary under a precautionary approach.

The proposal poses no concerns in terms of matters of air quality noting that the site is not designated as an Air Quality Management Area and the development provides landscaping that is likely to help enhance air quality locally. The nature of the development is not likely to result in any worse air quality matters.

The construction phase has the potential to cause environmental harm and even though this is transitory it is still a matter that needs to be mitigated and managed through a Demolition and Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Conclusion

The proposed development does not pose any significant concerns in terms of environmental considerations and there would be, subject to appropriate conditions, compliance with CP55 and CP56 of the development plan.

Other Issues

Sustainable Construction and Climate Change – This is technically a major application and as such ought to be subject to a Sustainable Energy Strategy. Whilst this has not been provided here it is noted that the proposal would be renovating an existing building with the installation of new windows and rooflights. This means that the proposals would have a low embodied carbon impact (compared to new build) and the proposals ought to enhance energy efficiency and reduce energy demand compared to the existing. Furthermore, the proposals would introduce roof-mounted solar PV to the buildings which would help support meeting energy demands through on-site renewables. Finally, the proposals increase cycle facilities and would provide housing in an accessible location. This ought to support modal shift and reduce reliance on the internal combustion engine. As such, in the context of the proposals it is considered to be satisfactory in terms of mitigating climate change.

Turning to addressing climate change the proposals would be positive because they would increase tree coverage and provide shade during hot weather and reduce heat island impacts. The landscaping scheme introduces permeability to the site which would be beneficial during storm events. Furthermore, the footprint of the buildings would be reduced through demolition and this would increase flood plain capacity. As such, the proposals would be positive in terms of adapting to climate change.

As such, it is considered that the proposals on balance satisfy the thrust of CP41 and Policy 1.

Pre-commencement Condition Agreement

This recommendation includes pre-commencement planning condition(s) relating to contamination; the demolition / construction phase. In accordance with Section 100ZA of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning (Pre-commencement Conditions) Regulations 2018, the Local Planning Authority formally notified the applicant/agent of the proposed condition(s) and sought their agreement. Written confirmation of agreement was received from the applicant's agent on 24 April 2026.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

At the heart of the NPPF there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development requiring local planning authorities to approve development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; and where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless (taken from paragraph 11d of the NPPF):

- The application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing development proposed; or
- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole;

The proposal is broadly compliant with relevant local and national planning policies in respect of the above considerations, subject to the recommended conditions and any necessary mitigation measures.

The development would deliver and facilitate clear benefits, including provision of additional housing in any area lacking 5 year housing land supply, delivering an efficient use of land, securing the optimum use of a non-designated heritage asset and providing betterment of a site that is in need of investment such as to contribute more positively to the vibrancy and vitality of this fringe of town centre location, which weigh positively in the overall planning balance.

No material considerations have been identified that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh these benefits or indicate that permission should be refused, having regard to the assessment above and the representations received.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered acceptable in planning terms and in accordance with the development plan, the National Planning Policy Framework, and all other relevant material considerations.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to conditions:

1.

3-year implementation

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.

Approved plans:

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

Site Location Plan Full Planning External Works - 1275_PL_S-002, Rev P1

Proposed Site Plan - 1275_PL_GA-00, Rev P1

Site Demolition Ground Floor Plan - 1207_PL_DE-00, Rev P1
 BUILDING 03 Proposed Elevation 01 - 1275_PL_GE-01, Rev P1
 BUILDING 03 Proposed Elevation 02 - 1275_PL_GE-02, Rev P1
 BUILDING 03 Proposed Elevation 03 - 1275_PL_GE-03, Rev P1
 BUILDING 03 Proposed Elevation 04 - 1275_PL_GE-04, Rev P1
 BLOCKS A-G Proposed Elevation 05 - 1275_PL_GE-05, Rev P1
 BLOCKS A-G Proposed Elevation 06 - 1275_PL_GE-06, Rev P1
 BLOCKS A-G Proposed Elevation 07 - 1275_PL_GE-07, Rev P1
 BLOCKS A-G Proposed Elevation 08 - 1275_PL_GE-08, Rev P1
 BLOCKS A-G Proposed Elevation 09 - 1275_PL_GE-09, Rev P1
 BLOCKS A-G Proposed Section AA - 1275_PL_GS-AA, Rev P1
 BLOCKS A-G Proposed Section CC - 1275_PL_GS-CC, Rev P1
 BLOCKS A-G Proposed Section DD - 1275_PL_GS-DD, Rev P1
 BLOCKS A-G Proposed Section EE - 1275_PL_GS-EE, Rev P1
 BLOCKS A-G Proposed Section FF - 1275_PL_GS-FF, Rev P1
 Plant Schedule - 328_GLA_00_00_SH_L_6001
 Illustrative Masterplan - 328_GLA_MP_XX_DR_L_7001
 Detail – Tree Pits - 328_GLA_XX_XX_DR_L_5401
 Detail – Tree Pits - 328_GLA_XX_XX_DR_L_5402
 Landscape Masterplan - 328_GLA_XX_XX_DR_L_1001
 Planting Proposals - 328_GLA_00_00_DR_L_1201
 Planting Proposals - 328_GLA_00_00_DR_L_1202
 Hard Landscape Proposals - 328_GLA_00_00_DR_L_1301
 Hard Landscape Proposals - 328_GLA_00_00_DR_L_1302
 Hard Landscape Proposals - 328_GLA_00_00_DR_L_1303
 Hard Landscape Proposals - 328_GLA_00_00_DR_L_1304
 Hard Landscape Proposals - 328_GLA_00_00_DR_L_1305
 Hard Landscape Proposals - 328_GLA_00_00_DR_L_1306
 Hard Landscape Proposals - 328_GLA_00_00_DR_L_1307
 Landscape Sections - 328_GLA_XX_XX_DR_L_3500

Section 4 of the Ecological Impact Assessment Report, Wildwood Ecology, September 2025 (WWE25110 EcIA)

Avonside Landscape Strategy (338_GLA_XX_XX_L_0001)

Design Note 03-11-2025 by BGY

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

3.

Contaminated Land:

No development shall commence on site until an investigation of the history and current condition of the site to determine the likelihood of the existence of contamination arising from previous uses (including asbestos) has been carried out and all of the following steps have been complied with to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority:

Step (i) A written report has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority which shall include details of the previous uses of the site and any adjacent sites for at least the last 100 years and a description of the current condition of the sites with

regard to any activities that may have caused contamination. The report shall confirm whether or not it is likely that contamination may be present on the site and the potential impact of any adjacent sites.

Step (ii) If the above report indicates that contamination may be present on, under or potentially affecting the proposed development site from adjacent land, or if evidence of contamination is found, a more detailed site investigation and risk assessment should be carried out in accordance with DEFRA and Environment Agency's "Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination CLR11" and other authoritative guidance and a report detailing the site investigation and risk assessment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Step (iii) If the report submitted pursuant to step (i) or (ii) indicates that remedial works are required, full details must be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approved in writing and thereafter implemented prior to the commencement of the development or in accordance with a timetable that has been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority as part of the approved remediation scheme. On completion of any required remedial works the applicant shall provide written confirmation to the Local Planning Authority that the works have been completed in accordance with the agreed remediation strategy.

REASON: To reduce the risks associated with land contamination.

4.

Demolition and Construction Environmental Management Plan

Prior to the commencement of works, including demolition, ground works/excavation, site clearance, vegetation clearance and boundary treatment works, a Demolition and Construction Environmental Management Plan (DCEMP) shall be submitted to the local planning authority for approval in writing. The Plan shall provide details of the avoidance, mitigation and protective measures to be implemented before and during the construction phase, including but not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Identification of ecological protection areas/buffer zones and tree root protection areas and details of physical means of protection, e.g. exclusion fencing.
- Working method statements for protected/priority species, such as nesting birds and reptiles.
- Work schedules for activities with specific timing requirements in order to avoid/reduce potential harm to ecological receptors; including details of when a licensed ecologist and/or ecological clerk of works (ECOW) shall be present on site.
- Key personnel, responsibilities and contact details (including Site Manager and ecologist/ECOW).
- a scheme to treat and remove suspended solids from surface water run-off during construction
- wheel washing facilities and appropriate disposal of effluent
- the use and routing of heavy plant, vehicles and machinery
- oils/chemicals and materials storage including refueling
- the location and pollution prevention for storage areas and compounds
- the control, storage and removal of spoil and waste
- measures for the protection of biodiversity (including fish species in the watercourse), including details of all pre-works ecological checks.

- recommendations relating to riparian mammals (water vole, otter and beaver) including covering of excavations to prevent entrapment in addition to minimising light spill onto the river corridor.

Development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved CEMP.

REASON: To ensure adequate protection and mitigation for the natural environment prior to and during construction, and that works are undertaken in line with current best practice and industry standards and are supervised by a suitably licensed and competent professional ecological consultant where applicable.

5.

Construction Method Statement:

No development shall commence on site (including any works of demolition), until a Construction Method Statement, which shall include the following:

- a) the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
- b) loading and unloading of plant and materials;
- c) storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
- d) the erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing (where appropriate);
- e) wheel washing facilities;
- f) a scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works;
- g) hours of construction, including deliveries.

has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The approved Statement shall be complied with in full throughout the demolition/construction period. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved construction method statement.

REASON: The application contained insufficient information to enable this matter to be considered prior to granting planning permission and the matter is required to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority before development commences in order that the development is undertaken in an acceptable manner, to minimise detrimental effects to the neighbouring amenities, the amenities of the area in general, detriment to the natural environment through the risks of pollution and dangers to highway safety, during the implementation of the development.

6.

Artificial Lighting:

No external light fixture or fitting will be installed within the application site unless details of existing and proposed new lighting have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The submitted details will demonstrate how the proposed lighting will impact on bat habitat compared to the existing situation. The plans will be in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standards set out by the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Notes on the Avoidance of Obtrusive Light (GN 01/2021) and Guidance note GN08/23 "Bats and artificial lighting at night", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals.

REASON: To avoid illumination of habitat used by bats.

INFORMATIVE - Biodiversity Enhancements:

The applicant is encouraged to provide ecological enhancements – such as swift and bat bricks, invertebrate blocks and habitat piles – as part of the site works. These should be considered in conjunction with the consultant ecologist.

INFORMATIVE – Permit to discharge

The applicant is advised by the Environment Agency that a permit to discharge (Environmental Permit) will be required if the construction period is greater than 3 months and the discharge is to surface waters. Any discharge will be governed by strict limits on suspended solids, pH, and if flocculants are used, an iron or aluminium limit.

INFORMATIVE – Flood Risk Activity Permit

The applicant is advised by the Environment Agency that the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 require a permit or exemption to be obtained for any flood risk activities any of the following activities. For further guidance please visit Flood risk activities: environmental permits - GOV.UK or contact the EA's National Customer Contact Centre on 03708 506 506 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm) or by emailing enquiries@environmentagency.gov.uk. The applicant should not assume that a permit will automatically be forthcoming once planning permission has been granted, and the EA advise the applicant to consult with them at the earliest opportunity.

INFORMATIVE – Flood Risk

The applicant is advised that there must be no temporary or permanent storage of material in the flood plain during or post demolition. The sheet piles running along the watercourse form part of a flood defence asset. The coping stones along the top of the piles must be retained and kept undamaged, as the height of the capping contributes to flood protection in this area. An 8-metre access to the river should be maintained, including during works, in the event of emergency works. For further information please contact the Environment Agency.

INFORMATIVE – Highways

The application involves the re-instatement/closure of an existing vehicle access/dropped kerb. The consent hereby granted shall not be construed as authority to carry out works on the highway. The applicant is advised that a licence will be required from Wiltshire's Highway Authority before any works are carried out on any footway, footpath, carriageway, verge or other land forming part of the highway. Please contact our Vehicle Crossing Team on vehicleaccess@wiltshire.gov.uk and/or 01225 713352 or visit their website at <http://wiltshire.gov.uk/highways-streets> to make an application.