



Design and Access & Heritage Statement

Site Address: 3 Coburg Square, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 7EP

Proposed Works: Reconstruction of existing single-storey rear outbuildings to form habitable accommodation, part two-storey front/side extension, erection of a front porch, and internal alterations.

1. Introduction & Overview

This statement accompanies a householder planning application for 3 Coburg Square. The property has suffered from historical underinvestment, is in a very poor state of repair, and requires major renovation. The proposal seeks a comprehensive, high-quality modernisation to rescue the dilapidated dwelling, bringing it back into viable residential use and positively contributing to the local family housing stock. The works include the reconstruction of existing single-storey rear outbuildings to form habitable accommodation, a part two-storey front/side extension to facilitate essential thermal upgrades, the erection of a front porch, and necessary internal alterations to rectify a disjointed and inherently unsafe layout.

2. Site Context & Heritage Context

The application site is a corner plot bordered by Coburg Square to the front and the public King Street Car Park along its western side elevation. The property is located within the Melksham Town Centre Conservation Area. The existing dwelling currently exhibits widespread poor condition, failing thermal performance, and a severely disjointed internal layout. Crucially, the existing first-floor landing is structurally and practically unsafe, currently providing no safe access to the bedrooms. These compounding issues render the property largely unsuitable for modern occupation without significant structural and architectural intervention.

3. Design, Scale, and Massing

The proposal has been carefully divided into distinct architectural elements to respect the host dwelling, resolve internal safety hazards, and comply with **Core Policy 57** (Ensuring high quality design and place shaping):

- **Part Two-Storey Front/Side Extension:** The existing top-floor bedroom is exceptionally narrow at just 2.1 metres wide. To bring the failing building fabric up to modern standards, Internal Wall Insulation (IWI) is urgently required. However, installing IWI would reduce the room's width to an uninhabitable size. Therefore, a modest first-floor extension is proposed, bringing the side wall flush with the ground floor footprint and in line with the front-facing wall. In strict accordance with the **Wiltshire Design Guide SPD (2024)**, this extension will feature a pitched roof where the new ridge is deliberately set down from the host property's main ridge. This drop in height ensures the extension reads clearly as a later addition, remains visually subservient to the original historic form, and actively minimises any potential 'terracing effect' within the street scene.
- **Single-Storey Rear Reconstruction:** The unsafe, mismatched rear outbuildings will be rebuilt on their exact footprint. While pitched roofs are standard within the wider Conservation Area, a contemporary, high-quality flat roof has been specifically selected for this deep single-storey element as a heritage-led design choice. Attempting to span a pitched roof over this depth of footprint would necessitate an excessively high ridge that would obscure the original first-floor historic fabric, creating an overbearing mass that competes with the host dwelling. Instead, the crisp, low-profile flat roof acts as a calm, horizontal datum. This deliberately restricts the bulk of the addition, ensures strict visual subservience, and provides a clear architectural break between the original two-storey form and the modern ground-floor intervention.
- **Front Porch:** The existing porch is exceptionally constrained and fails to provide a functional, safe threshold for a modern family home. A new 2.26m² front porch is proposed to rectify this, offering vital weather protection and improved security. Designed with modest proportions sympathetic to the street scene, it adheres to local design principles ensuring it remains subservient and does not dominate the principal elevation.
- **Fenestration & Materials:** Proposed windows and doors will be white uPVC double-glazed units to match the existing profiles. As detailed on the Proposed Front/West Elevation drawing (CS 04), new windows will be introduced on the front elevation, carefully proportioned to match the existing first-floor bedroom window. The introduction of these windows provides a significant visual enhancement by breaking up what is currently a large, unarticulated blank wall, thereby improving the dwelling's active frontage and relationship with the street scene. To ensure safety and provide necessary privacy for the new living,

dining and kitchen, these front-facing windows will feature obscured and toughened glazing in their lower panels, successfully balancing residential amenity with a traditional street-facing aesthetic.

4. Heritage & Conservation Impact

In accordance with **Core Policy 58** and **JMNP2 Policy 21**, this proposal has been designed to "preserve and enhance" the character of the Melksham Conservation Area:

- The first-floor extension utilises a matching yet lowered pitched roofline to preserve the traditional silhouette and historic roofscape of the dwelling without competing with the original structure.
- By utilising a contemporary flat roof for the single-storey rear element, the design avoids historical pastiche (faking history). It replaces the chaotic, conflicting rooflines of the dilapidated outbuildings with a neat, highly legible addition that allows the original historic fabric of the main house to remain the dominant architectural feature.
- Corner plots provide a highly visible focal point to the street scene. The visual improvements to the side and front elevations—specifically replacing the dilapidated outbuildings with a subservient addition and introducing sympathetic fenestration to a blank facade—will significantly enhance the appearance of the building from the adjacent King Street Car Park and Coburg Square, actively improving the wider Conservation Area setting.

5. Neighbour Amenity & Privacy

The proposal has been carefully designed to ensure there is zero adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties, natively satisfying the separation distances and daylight safeguarding principles set out in Wiltshire's design guidance:

- The proposed extensions (both single and two-storey) are located entirely on the western elevation, which directly flanks the 82-space public King Street Car Park.
- Because there are no immediate residential neighbours on this boundary, the proposal completely mitigates standard overshadowing, 45-degree right-to-light, and overlooking concerns. All primary ground-floor glazing is directed into the applicant's private courtyard.

6. Sustainability & Housing Supply

Beyond essential upgrades, the most sustainable building practice is the retention and refurbishment of existing structures. This major renovation aligns perfectly with **JMNP2 Policy 1 (Sustainable Design and Construction)** by embedding the "Energy Hierarchy" through fabric-first retrofitting. The widening of the first floor explicitly allows for the installation of deep Internal Wall Insulation (IWI) without sacrificing habitable space, while the internal reconfiguration rectifies the dangerous first-floor landing. By executing these works, the applicant is rescuing a failing, hazardous, and energy-inefficient property and restoring it into a safe, high-quality, thermally efficient three-bedroom home, providing a much-needed contribution to the local housing stock. Furthermore, a designated external area for secure bicycle parking and refuse/recycling bins is retained on the site plan.

7. Highways & Parking

The dwelling does not currently benefit from dedicated off-street parking within its red line boundary, though informal frontage parking is available. The site is situated in a highly sustainable town centre location, immediately adjacent to the King Street public car park (which features EV charging points) and within close walking distance of public transport networks. As such, the existing parking arrangement is considered entirely acceptable for the site's sustainable context.

8. Conclusion

This proposal represents a sensible, high-quality, and urgently necessary modernisation of 3 Coburg Square. By solving severe structural hazards, thermal inefficiencies, and dangerous internal layout deficiencies—specifically the lack of safe access to the first-floor bedrooms—the development secures the long-term future of the dwelling and safely returns a poor-condition property back into active residential use. The carefully considered rooflines, improved fenestration, and sympathetic design approach will actively enhance the Conservation Area, while the adjacent public car park ensures no harm to neighbour amenity. We respectfully request the council's support in bringing this family home safely back to life.