

APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/02468
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Annexe, 350 Snarlton Lane, Melksham, SN12 7QP
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Change of use of the annex to let
RECOMMENDATION:	Refuse

PROPOSAL

The application seeks permission to change the use of an existing annexe into a separate unit of accommodation “to let”. The applicant advises that the annex is currently occupied by an older son who is looking to move out.

The “residential units” section of the application form advises: “Proposed: 1-bedroom flat/maisonette (market housing)” and so whilst the application form also advises “no net gain” in the number of residential units, there is no mention of commercial use, visitor turnover, management arrangements or anything that would hint at a sui generis short-term let. As such the proposal is being assessed as an independent dwelling to be rented out. This constitutes a material change of use for which planning permission is required.

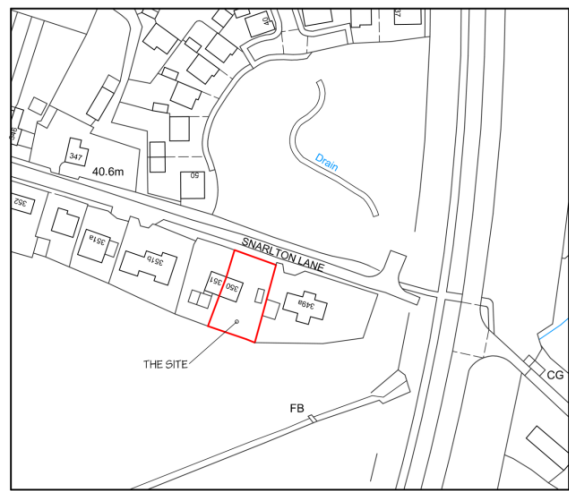
The existing annexe is indicated below by the red arrow:



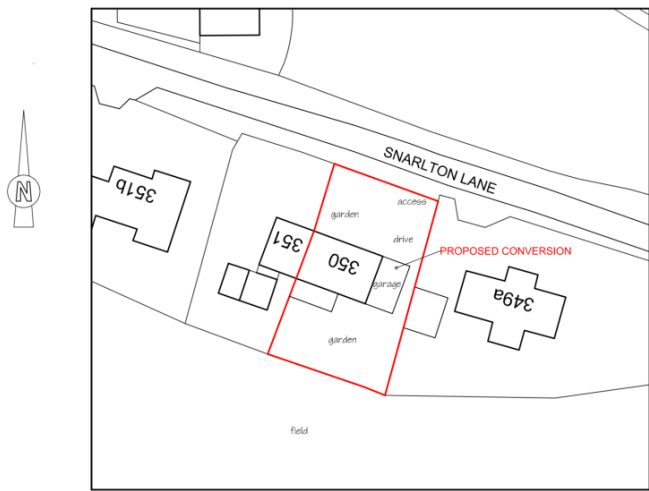
In terms of accommodation, there is a bedroom at first floor (approx. 15 sq m, although some of this is restricted head room), and an open plan kitchen/diner/lounge and shower room at

ground floor level, with a floor area of about 23sq m. The total floor area is therefore about 38 sq m.

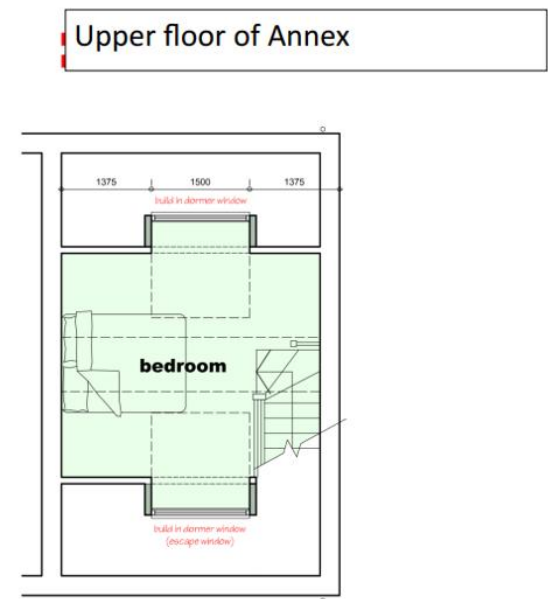
The following proposed location, site, floor plans and section have been submitted:



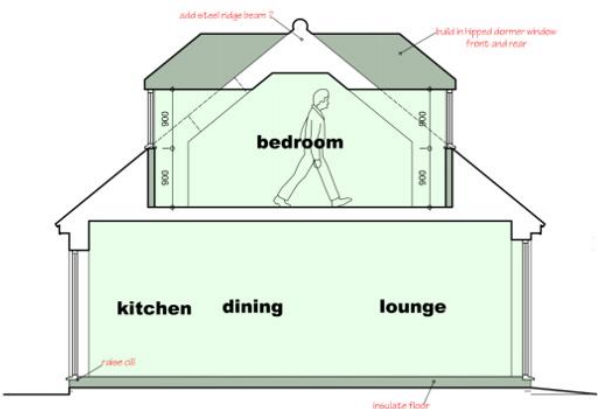
LOCATION PLAN



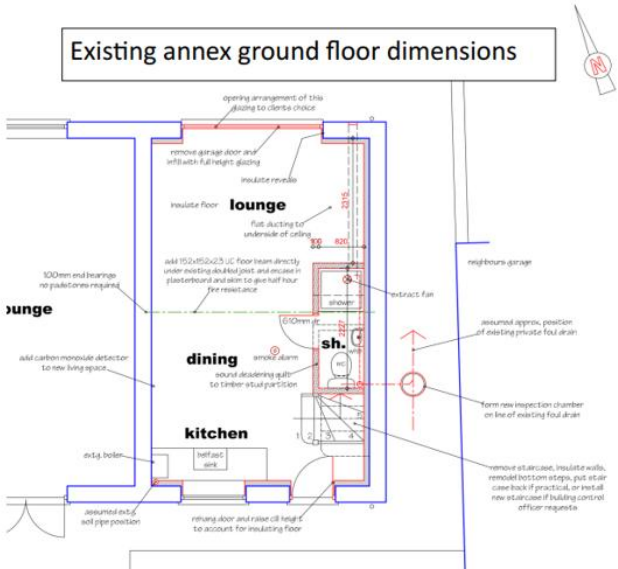
SITE PLAN



ROOF SPACE PLAN



SECTION



Existing annex ground floor dimensions

NOTE ON SUBMITTED PLANS AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The application seeks permission for the change of use of the annex to allow it to be let. However, the submitted information is inconsistent and lacks sufficient detail to enable a full and proper assessment of the proposal.

The application form indicates the creation of a 1-bedroom market housing unit, which suggests the formation of an independent dwelling. However, the submitted plans continue to refer to the proposed building as “annexe”, and do not clearly demonstrate how the building and land would function as a separate planning unit. This creates a fundamental lack of clarity as to the nature of the development proposed.

In addition, the plans are deficient in a number of key respects:

- The red line site boundary encompasses the entire residential curtilage of the host dwelling and does not define the extent of land associated with the annex. As such, no separate curtilage is identified for the proposed unit. This also creates uncertainty as to the extent of the planning unit proposed, which is fundamental to assessing the development as a separate dwelling
- No area of private amenity space is shown to serve the annex, nor is any distinction made between shared and private space.
- There is no clear allocation of on-site parking spaces between the main dwelling and the annex.
- No bin storage or servicing arrangements are shown.

These matters are fundamental to assessing whether the proposal would provide an appropriate standard of accommodation and function satisfactorily as an independent dwelling.

During the course of the application, additional drawings, which were requested to overcome these issues, were submitted in Word document format. These documents are not suitable for formal assessment purposes, as they are not fixed, to scale or capable of being reliably measured, and do not constitute acceptable planning drawings. The applicant was advised that plans should be submitted in PDF format; however, to date (approx. 4 weeks later) no such revised plans have been received. The plans submitted in Word document format were not formally accepted and accordingly the application has been assessed on the basis of the originally submitted plans.

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The application site is an annexe at 350 Snarilton Lane. No.350 is a two storey semi detached dwelling which was extended with a two storey side extension and garage extension in 2013. The garage and roof space above were converted into the annexe c2018.

The site is located on the south side of Snariton Lane, at the eastern end of the lane. It is within the development boundary for Melksham. To the south of the site is Forest and Sandridge School. The site is indicated with a red flag on the plan below:



Running between the site and Forest and Sandridge School is public footpath MELK105, indicated in purple on the plan above.

There are no historic, landscape or ecological constraints covering the site, which is Flood Zone 1.

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
W/13/00280/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 22/3/2013 – Two storey and single storey side extension
18/03495/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 7/6/2018 – Convert attached garage and garage roof space into annexe
PL/2026/01233 - Removal/variation of conditions Decision - Withdrawn by Council Date: 27/2/2026 – Convert attached garage and garage roof space into annex

Most relevant is application 18/03495/FUL which sought permission to convert the attached garage and garage roof space into an annexe to be used by the applicant's family. During consideration of that application Melksham Town Council provided the following comment:

"No objection – Whilst having no objection to the provision of an annexe to the side of this property, Councillors raised a concern this annexe could be used as a separate dwelling in the future, which could have implications, with regard to the amenities currently enjoyed by the residents of the main dwelling, as well as parking implications. Therefore, Councillors asked that a condition be placed on any planning permission that this annexe cannot be used as a separate dwelling."

Officers agreed a condition necessary, and the following was attached to that planning permission:

Condition 3 (of 18/03495/FUL): The accommodation hereby permitted shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the main dwelling, known as 350 Snarlton Lane and it shall remain within the same planning unit as the main dwelling.

REASON: The additional accommodation is sited in a position where the Local Planning Authority, having regard to the reasonable standards of residential amenity, access, and planning policies pertaining to the area, would not permit a wholly separate dwelling.

RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

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 1 Settlement Strategy
- Core Policy 2 Delivery Strategy
- Core Policy 15 Spatial Strategy for the Melksham Community Area
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development
- Core Policy 64 Demand Management

Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 :

Policy 20 of the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan seeks to secure high quality design; however, this policy is primarily concerned with the external appearance and character of development, and does not provide specific guidance in respect of internal living conditions or residential amenity.

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
- Technical housing standards – nationally described space standards

ISSUES

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

- Whether the development is acceptable in principle (CP 1 and 2)
- 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 proposal would have a negative effect upon highway safety, including if there is sufficient parking for the proposed development (CP 61 and 64)
- Are there any other planning issues raised by the development?

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Wiltshire Council Highways: Comment

“I refer to the above planning application.

To ensure adequate car parking is provided for the existing and proposed separate unit, a plan shall be provided to illustrate dedicated car parking, which shall be in accordance with Wiltshire Councils Parking Standards; 1 bedroom unit = 1 space, 2/3 bedroom unit = 2 spaces, 4+ bedroom = 3 spaces.”

Melksham Town Council: No objection

“Melksham Town Council has no objection to the application”

Wiltshire Council Rights of Way: No comments received

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 site notice displayed near the site, and neighbour notification letters sent to adjoining and nearby properties. No representations had been received at the time of writing.

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

Policy Context

Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy of the WCS establishes a hierarchy of settlements to guide where development should be focused. The policy prioritises growth in:

- Principal Settlements (e.g., Salisbury, Chippenham, Trowbridge) – main focus for strategic growth.
- Market Towns – support local services and employment; suitable for sustainable development.
- Local Service Centres – smaller towns and villages with a range of services; limited development supported.
- Large and Small Villages – development should be limited and respond to local needs.
- Outside the defined settlements – development is strictly controlled and generally not supported unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy of the WCS sets out how development will be distributed and delivered across Wiltshire. The policy emphasises:

- Sustainable patterns of growth, reducing the need to travel and supporting local services.
- Development should be plan-led, aligning with the settlement strategy and supported by infrastructure.
- Windfall development (not allocated in plans) must still comply with the principles of sustainable development.
- Development outside settlement boundaries is generally not permitted, unless it meets specific policy exceptions (as set out in paragraph 4.25 of the WCS).

Together, CP1 and CP2 ensure that new development is strategically located, sustainable, and supports the character and function of Wiltshire's communities.

Assessment

The application site is located within the defined settlement boundary for Melksham, which is identified as a Market Town under Core Policy 1 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy. Market Towns are considered suitable locations for sustainable development, where development can support local services and contribute towards meeting housing needs.

Core Policy 2 supports development within settlement boundaries where it accords with the plan-led strategy and represents sustainable development. As the proposal relates to the re-use of an existing building within an established residential curtilage, the principle of residential development in this location is acceptable, subject to compliance with other relevant policies of the development plan.

The proposal would result in the creation of an additional dwelling, which carries modest weight in support of the scheme, particularly in the context of the Council's current housing land supply position.

However, the acceptability of the proposal does not rest solely on its location. The development must also demonstrate that it would provide a suitable and sustainable form of residential accommodation, with appropriate living conditions, layout, and servicing arrangements.

Conclusion

The proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle, having regard to its location within the settlement boundary for Melksham. However, this does not outweigh the requirement for the development to comply with other policies of the development plan, including those relating to design, residential amenity, and transport.

5 Year Housing Land Supply

The Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply (it is currently 2.8 years), and therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged.

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.

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 proposal relates to the change of use of an existing annexe and does not involve any external alterations to the building. The annexe was previously granted planning permission and is considered to be appropriately designed and compatible with the host dwelling and surrounding residential context.

In visual terms, the building appears as a subordinate addition within the curtilage of the main dwelling and retains the character of ancillary accommodation. The proposal would not result in any changes to the external appearance of the site, and the building would continue to read as a modest, secondary structure within the plot.

Whilst the proposal would result in the annex being occupied independently, this would not in itself give rise to any material harm to the character and appearance of the area. The site is located within an established residential area, and the presence of an additional unit of accommodation would not be visually prominent or out of keeping with the surrounding pattern of development.

Conclusion

The proposal would not result in any material harm to the character or appearance of the site or the wider area and is therefore considered to accord with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant provisions of the NPPF in respect of design.

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.

Assessment – amenity of neighbouring dwellings:

The proposal relates to the change of use of an existing annexe and does not involve any external alterations to the building. The physical relationship between the annex and neighbouring properties would therefore remain unchanged.

In terms of residential amenity, the annex is already occupied as ancillary accommodation associated with the main dwelling. Whilst the proposal would result in the unit being occupied independently, it is not considered that this would give rise to any materially greater impact on neighbouring occupiers in terms of overlooking, loss of light, overbearing impact, noise or general disturbance.

The intensity of use arising from occupants of a small , 1-bed residential unit would be broadly comparable to that of the existing lawful use as ancillary accommodation. Any potential comings and goings, including vehicle movements, are not considered likely to result in a significant increase in activity that would adversely affect neighbouring residential amenity to an unacceptable degree.

Assessment – amenity of future occupants:

Whilst there is no adopted local policy requiring compliance with the nationally described space standards, these standards provide a useful benchmark for assessing the suitability of residential accommodation.

A one-bedroom dwelling for a single occupant is typically expected to provide a minimum gross internal area of approximately 39 square metres, which may reduce to around 37 square metres where only a shower room is provided, rising to approximately 58 square metres where accommodation is intended for two occupants. In addition, 1.5 sqm of built-in storage space should be provided. The standards advise that *“any area with a headroom of less than 1.5m is not counted within the Gross Internal Area unless used solely for storage.”*

In this case, the submitted plans indicate that the unit would provide approximately 38 square metres of internal floor space – this area includes areas of restricted headroom - and no clear provision of dedicated storage space. Approximate calculations by the case officer suggest that, if the limited headroom is taken into account, the total GIA may only be about 33 sqm.

The accommodation therefore falls below nationally recognised standards and reinforces concerns that, whilst such an arrangement may be acceptable in the context of ancillary accommodation, it is considered that this would not provide an appropriate standard of living conditions for an independent dwelling.

The proposal therefore fails to demonstrate that future occupiers would benefit from an adequate level of internal space, contrary to the requirement to secure a high standard of amenity.

In addition to the above, the submitted plans do not identify any area of private amenity space to serve the proposed dwelling. The red line site boundary encompasses the wider residential curtilage of the host dwelling and no distinction is made as to what land would be associated with the annex should it function as an independent unit.

As such, it has not been demonstrated that the proposed occupants would benefit from an adequate level of private outdoor amenity space. Whilst later drawings sought to indicate an

area of amenity space, these were not submitted in an acceptable format and cannot be relied upon for the purposes of assessment.

In the absence of clear and reliable information, it is not possible to conclude that the proposal would provide a satisfactory standard of residential amenity, contrary to the objectives of Core Policy 57 and the NPPF.

Conclusion

Overall, whilst the proposal would not result in any material harm to the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, it has not been demonstrated that the proposed development would provide an acceptable standard of living conditions for future occupants.

In particular, the limited internal floorspace, presence of restricted headroom, and the absence of clearly defined private amenity space result in a form of accommodation more akin to ancillary residential use than an independent dwelling. These shortcomings are fundamental and mean that the proposal would fail to deliver the high standard of amenity required for a self-contained residential unit.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered to be contrary to Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

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.

Assessment

The submitted plans do not clearly demonstrate the provision of dedicated parking to serve the proposed dwelling. Whilst the application form indicates that two parking spaces exist on site, no distinction is made as to how parking would be allocated between the main dwelling and the annex should it function as an independent unit.

The Highway Authority has advised that, in order to ensure adequate parking provision, a plan should be provided to illustrate dedicated parking spaces for both the existing and proposed unit, in accordance with Wiltshire Council's parking standards. No such information is included on the submitted plans.

Whilst later drawings sought to indicate parking provision, these were not submitted in an acceptable format and cannot be relied upon for the purposes of assessment. In the absence of clear and reliable information, it has not been demonstrated that the proposal would provide adequate parking provision, contrary to the requirements of Core Policies 57, 61 and 64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Conclusion

Overall, it has not been demonstrated that the proposed development would provide adequate parking provision to serve both the existing dwelling and the proposed unit.

Whilst the application form indicates that parking exists on site, the submitted plans do not clearly identify the allocation of spaces between the main dwelling and the annex, nor do they demonstrate that sufficient provision would be retained in accordance with the Council's adopted parking standards. The Highway Authority has specifically requested clarification of this matter, which has not been satisfactorily addressed through the submission of acceptable plans.

In the absence of clear and reliable information, it is not possible to conclude that the proposed development would function satisfactorily in terms of parking provision or avoid conflict between occupants. As such, the proposal fails to demonstrate compliance with Core Policies 57, 61 and 64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

PLANNING BALANCE

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;

Having regard to paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework the presumption in favour of sustainable development ('tilted balance') is engaged as the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply.

Benefits of the Proposal

Provision of Market Housing

The delivery of new homes is a material benefit, particularly in the context of the Council's current housing land supply position. The proposal would result in the provision of one additional dwelling within the settlement boundary of Melksham.

- **Benefit:** Provision of 1 new dwelling.
- **Weight:** Moderate.

Identified Harms

Where harms are identified, they must be considered in terms of their nature, extent, and policy conflict, and whether they significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

Substandard Living Conditions for Future Occupants

The proposal fails to demonstrate that the accommodation would provide an appropriate standard of living conditions for future occupiers. The unit would provide limited internal floorspace (approximately 36 sqm across two floors, including areas of restricted headroom), and no clearly defined private amenity space is identified on the submitted plans.

These deficiencies are fundamental to the acceptability of the development and indicate that the accommodation would not function satisfactorily as an independent dwelling, instead reflecting a form of accommodation more suited to ancillary residential use.

- **Harm:** Provision of substandard and inadequately evidenced residential accommodation
- **Weight:** Significant

Failure to Demonstrate a Coherent and Functional Planning Unit

The submitted plans do not clearly define the curtilage of the proposed dwelling, with the red line encompassing the wider residential site and no distinction made between land serving the main dwelling and the annex.

This results in a lack of clarity as to how the proposed unit would function in practice, including in relation to amenity space, servicing and access, and prevents the Local Planning Authority from concluding that a satisfactory and self-contained planning unit would be created.

- **Harm:** Failure to demonstrate a coherent and functional separate dwelling
- **Weight:** Significant

Highways Impact

The proposal fails to demonstrate that adequate parking provision would be retained to serve both the existing dwelling and the proposed unit. The Highway Authority has requested a plan showing dedicated spaces in accordance with adopted standards; however, this has not been provided in an acceptable format.

As such, it has not been demonstrated that the development would function satisfactorily in terms of parking provision or avoid conflict between occupiers, or potential overspill parking pressures.

- **Harm:** Failure to demonstrate adequate and acceptable parking provision
- **Weight:** Moderate

CONCLUSION

The proposal fails to demonstrate that it would provide an acceptable standard of residential accommodation, with fundamental shortcomings identified in respect of internal space, private amenity space, parking provision and the definition of the planning unit. These deficiencies are significant and go to the heart of whether the development would function satisfactorily as an independent dwelling.

It is noted that the annexe was originally approved subject to a condition restricting its occupation to ancillary use, reflecting concerns at that time regarding its suitability as an independent dwelling, particularly in respect of amenity and site layout.

Whilst the current application seeks to regularise such a use, the submitted information does not demonstrate that these underlying concerns have been satisfactorily addressed.

The application has also been considered in light of the consultation responses received. Melksham Town Council have raised no objection to the proposal and no representations have been received from neighbouring occupiers. Whilst this support is noted, these responses do not outweigh the identified concerns relating to the standard of accommodation and the lack of clarity as to how the development would function as an independent dwelling.

Whilst the provision of an additional dwelling carries moderate weight in the planning balance, this benefit is limited in scale, and when assessed against paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, the adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the limited benefits of providing a single additional dwelling. The presumption in favour of sustainable development is therefore not sufficient to justify the development.

RECOMMENDATION: That Planning Permission be REFUSED for the following reasons:

1. Substandard living conditions / failure to provide acceptable accommodation

The proposed development, by reason of the limited internal floorspace and the absence of clearly defined private amenity space, would fail to provide an adequate standard of living conditions for future occupiers. The submitted plans do not demonstrate that the unit would function satisfactorily as an independent dwelling, instead reflecting a form of accommodation more suited to ancillary residential use.

As such, the proposal is contrary to Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework, which require development to secure a high standard of amenity for future occupants.

2. Failure to demonstrate a coherent planning unit

The submitted plans fail to clearly define the curtilage of the proposed dwelling, with the application site encompassing the wider residential curtilage of the host property and no distinction made between land serving the main dwelling and the annex. As a result, it has not been demonstrated that a satisfactory and self-contained planning unit would be created, or that the development would function effectively as an independent dwelling.

In the absence of clear and reliable information, the proposal fails to demonstrate compliance with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. Inadequate parking provision

The proposal fails to demonstrate that adequate parking provision would be retained to serve both the existing dwelling and the proposed unit, with no clear allocation of spaces shown on the submitted plans in accordance with the Council's adopted standards.

As such, it has not been demonstrated that the development would function satisfactorily in terms of parking provision or avoid conflict between occupiers or the potential for overspill parking. The proposal is therefore contrary to Core Policies 61 and 64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

INFORMATIVE

This decision is based on consideration of the following plans and documents:

- Application form received 16 April 2026
- Location and Proposed Block Plan 1958/01 received 28 April 2026
- Proposal Details (Roof Space Plan and Section) 1958/06A received 28 April 2026
- Existing Ground Floor Plan (no plan number) received 29 April 2026
- Proposal Details (elevations) 1958/07A received 28 April 2026

For the avoidance of doubt, drawings submitted in Word document format during the course of the application have not been accepted as formal planning drawings and have not been relied upon in the determination of this application.