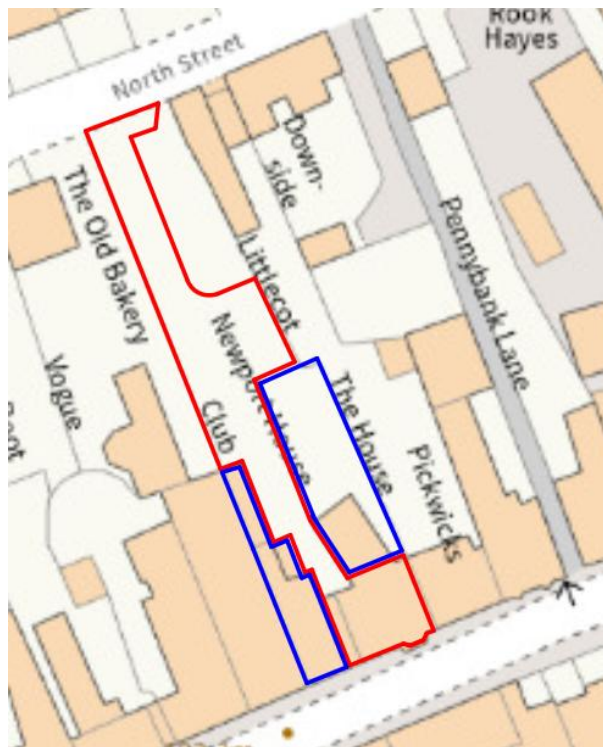


APPLICATION FOR FULL-PLANNING PERMISSION CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/02689
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Newport House, Salisbury Street, Mere, Warminster, BA12 6HE
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Proposed Conversion of a Single Dwelling into Two Apartments
RECOMMENDATION:	That Planning Permission be GRANTED



PROPOSAL

This application proposes to convert and subdivide an existing dwelling into two apartments. Only internal works are proposed to facilitate the division of the dwelling; there are no external works proposed.

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The application site consists of a two-storey mid terrace residential dwelling located on Salisbury Street which lies in the centre of Mere, a local service centre as categorised by Wiltshire Core Strategy CP1, CP2 and CP17.

The site is located in an area with the lowest risk of flooding (Flood Zone 1), no risk to surface water flooding, and with a risk to groundwater flooding to surface and subsurface assets with the possibility of groundwater emerging at the surface locally. The application site lies within a special landscape area in accordance with saved policy C6 from the Salisbury District Local Plan.



The application site lies within the conservation area of Mere and while it is not a listed building itself, it is adjacent to numerous listed buildings and is attached to Grade II listed building with reference 1130731 on the east. The extract above shows the application site in relation to the surrounding listed buildings hatched in black.

The application site is bordered by a highway on the north (North Street) and a highway on the south, Salisbury Street.

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
S/1991/0226 - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 24/4/1991 – CHANGE OF USE FROM A SINGLE RESIDENTIAL HOUSE INTO 2 NO DWELLINGS TOGETHER WITH ERECTION OF A DETACHED DWELLING FRONTING NORTH STREET AND CONSTRUCTION OF ACCESS TO
S/1990/0478 - Full planning permission Decision - Refused Date: 6/6/1990 – CHANGE OF USE FROM A SINGLE DWELLING HOUSE INTO 3 NO FLATS WITH CONSTRUCTION OF NEW ACCESS TO NORTH STREET
S/1991/1750 - Listed building consent Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 22/1/1992 – L/B APPLICATION - DEMOLISH EXISTING GARAGE TO NORTH STREET, TO MAKE WAY FOR PROPOSED DWELLING GRANTED PLANNING PERMISSION (S/91/0226)

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Statutory Legislation:

National Planning Policy:

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

Development Plan:

The development plan for Wiltshire comprises the *Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)* (adopted January 2015) and any made neighbourhood plans, which remains the principal statutory planning document guiding development across the county. In line with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Though the development plan is considered as a whole, those parts deemed to be particularly relevant to this application are listed below:

The adopted *Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)*, with particular regard to:

- Core Policy 1 Settlement Strategy;
- Core Policy 2 Delivery Strategy;
- Core Policy 3 Infrastructure Requirements;
- Core Policy 17 Spatial Strategy: Mere Community Area;
- 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 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 64 Demand Management
- Core Policy 67 Flood Risk

Saved Salisbury District Local Plan Policies

- Saved Policy C6: Special Landscape Area

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

Neighbourhood Plan

The Designation of Mere Neighbourhood Area has been approved in accordance with section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended for the purposes of Neighbourhood Planning and Part 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended 2016. However, at the time of writing no neighbourhood plan has been made.

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 scheme would preserve or enhance the historic environment (CP 58)
- 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)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WC Highways: No objection subject to conditions

WC Conservation: No objection

Mere Town Council: Support.

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:

- Neighbour notification letters sent to adjoining and nearby properties;
- A site notice displayed near the site;
- 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.

No representation from members of the public were received during the consultation period.

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 of Mere, which is identified as a Local Service Centre under Core Policy 1 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS). As such, the settlement is considered an appropriate location for limited residential growth that supports local services and facilities. In accordance with Core Policy 2, the proposal represents the conversion of 1 dwelling to 2 apartments within a town centre location and makes efficient use of previously developed residential land in a sustainable location, thereby reducing the need to travel and supporting the vitality of the town. The proposal does not result in development beyond the settlement boundary and therefore avoids any encroachment into the open countryside, consistent with the spatial strategy of the WCS.

In addition, the subdivision of a dwelling to 2 apartments aligns with relevant National Planning Policy Framework objectives by contributing to housing supply through the effective use of sites in sustainable locations, whilst promoting well-designed places and responding appropriately to its local context. Taken together, the proposal accords with the strategic and local planning policy framework, and the principle of residential development on this site is therefore acceptable, subject to detailed assessment of design, and technical matters.

Conclusion

Having regard to the site's location within the Mere settlement boundary, its classification as a Local Service Centre, and the relevant provisions of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the NPPF, officers consider that the principle of residential development on this site is acceptable.

5 Year Housing Land Supply

The Wiltshire Housing Land Supply Statement (June 2025) provides the latest position on the Council's ability to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land, which is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

The National Planning Policy Framework was revised in December 2024. This has reintroduced the requirement to meet five years' worth of deliverable sites and a buffer to be applied to the five-year housing requirement in all circumstances, and has revised the Local Housing Need calculation to establish the five-year housing requirement. These factors have resulted in a substantial increase in the five-year housing requirement to be met from the previous calculation. When this is assessed against the housing land supply which can be delivered within five years, the recalculation shows a significant reduction in the number of years supply. The resulting position shows that the Council can currently demonstrate a 2.42 years housing land supply of housing at a unitary authority level. This is considered to be a substantial shortfall.

The absence of a five-year housing land supply is a material consideration in the determination of this application. In accordance with Paragraphs 78 and 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), for applications involving the provision of housing, where there is a shortfall in the supply of deliverable housing sites, the most important policies for determining the application should be considered out of date. The current housing land supply shortfall is a factor that must be considered in the planning balance and in this case, as a five-year housing land supply cannot be demonstrated, the weight that can be applied to the most important policies for determining this application should be assessed and altered in the light of the shortage in housing land supply. The proposal must be assessed against the national policy context of the need to boost housing supply and the benefits of delivering new homes whilst having particular regard to the key policies set out in paragraph 11(d)(ii) and Footnote 9 of the NPPF.

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.

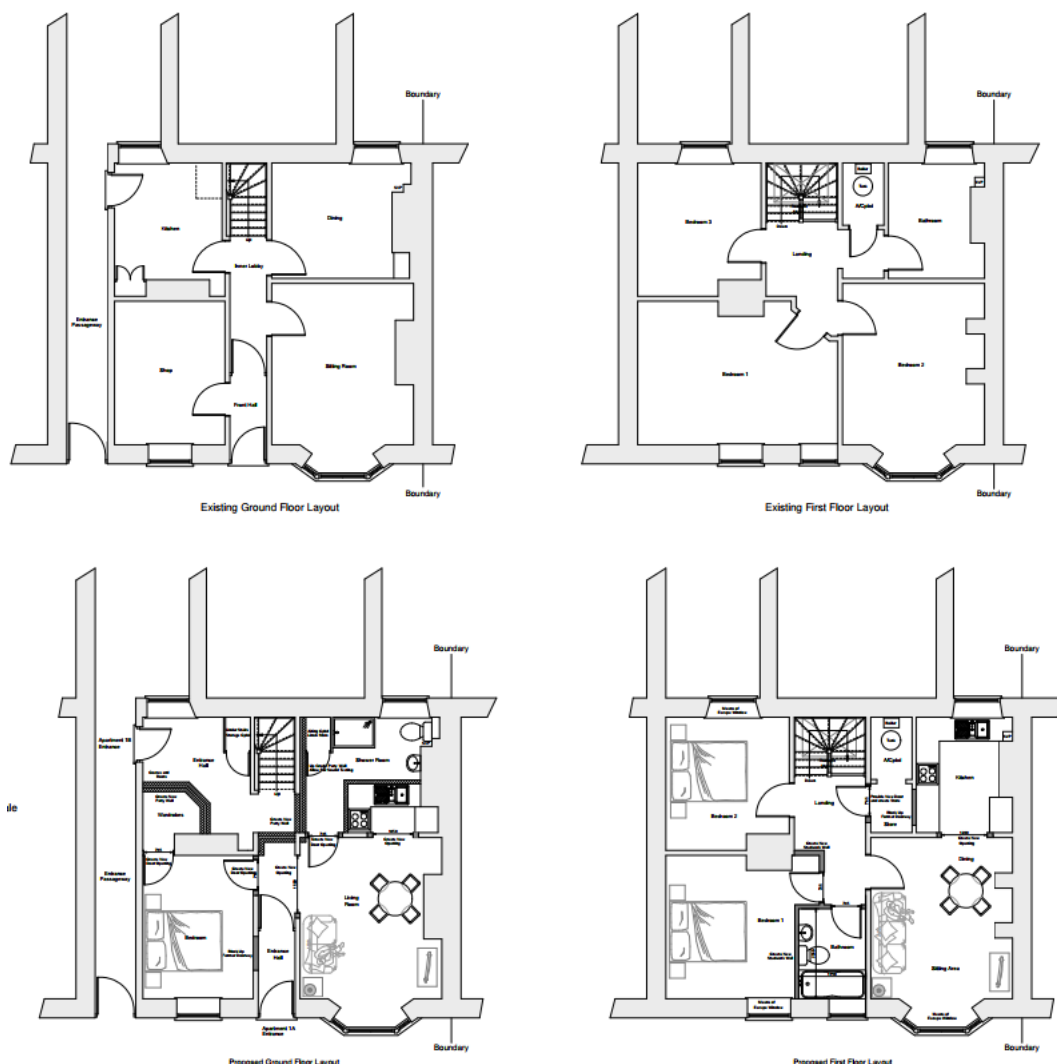
Assessment

The application site consists of a two-storey terraced dwelling fronting Salisbury Street. Attached to the rear of the application site is an existing two storey dwelling under the same ownership of the application site but not subject to any changes as part of this application. The application site benefits from having two existing external entrances one from the highway and a secondary entrance via a passageway on the west. The application proposes the front entrance to be used by the first apartment which has one bedroom, a shower room, and an open plan living kitchen and dining area. The second apartment is proposed to be accessed from the side entrance which will lead to an entrance hall with a staircase up to the first floor. Once on the first floor, there will be two bedrooms, a bathroom, and an open plan kitchen living and dining area.

This application does not propose external alterations or extensions to facilitate the conversion of the dwelling to two apartments. The internal works include the creation of a joined-up party wall, various changes to wall openings and identifying means of escape windows for the first floor apartment.

Conclusion

The application does not propose any external changes to the existing dwelling, from a design perspective, all internal rooms have been provided with a window with ample amenity and living spaces provided internally.



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 16 (Listed Building Consent)/Section 66 (Planning Permission) 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 58B of the Planning Act 1990 requires that in considering whether to grant planning permission or permission in principle for the development of land in England which affects a registered park and garden, the LPA must have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the asset or its setting.

Section 72(1) of the Act requires the Council to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of designated Conservation Areas.

The NPPF outlines government policy for planning. Chapter 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development. In particular:

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”.

Paragraphs 213-215(214-216) require a balanced approach with any harm which would be caused being weighed against the potential public benefits which might be achieved.

Paragraph 220 advises that not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm or less than substantial harm as appropriate.

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.

Assessment

The application site is located within Mere Conservation Area, while it is not a listed building, it is attached to a Grade II listed building on the east and is located adjacent to numerous listed buildings along Salisbury Road. The LPA’s conservation officer has noted that the application site makes a positive contribution to the character of this part of the conservation area. The conservation officer has no objections to the proposed works. The submitted planning statement has noted: *No.1 Newport House hasn’t seen any real change or*

refurbishment in a number of years and shows signs of deterioration and requires modernisation.

This application proposes to convert the dwelling into 2 apartments. Refurbishment of this application site would help secure the optimum viable use of the application site and support its long-term conservation. This would in turn protect the attached and adjacent heritage asset and the wider conservation in terms of economic, social progress and provides a small-scale public benefit of retention and creation of two apartments in a sustainable town centre location for future use.

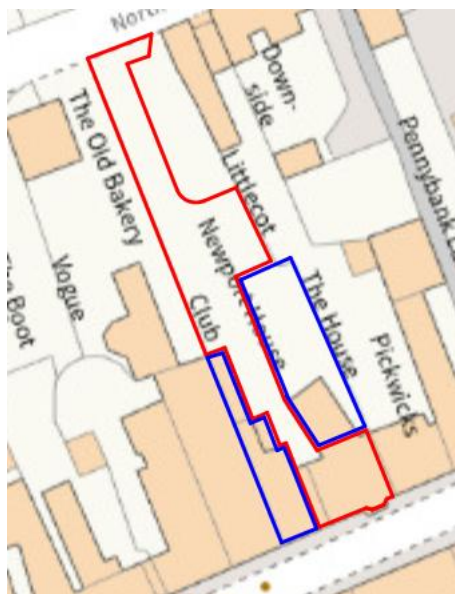
Amenity

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.

The application site is a single residential property with a ground floor room previously used as a shop. The application site lies adjacent to similar buildings along Salisbury Street with historic mixed uses of shops and residential dwellings typical of historic town centre buildings. The application does not propose extensions or additional windows to facilitate the conversion of the dwelling to two apartments. Given that the property is currently a C3 dwelling and will be retained in residential use but as two apartments, and as there are no extensions or alterations, it can therefore be concluded that the proposed works will not detrimentally affect the existing relationship of the application site and neighbouring dwelling in terms of amenity impacts. There are therefore no significant concerns regarding amenity impacts to neighbouring properties.





In terms of providing adequate amenity to the occupiers of the application site, the proposal does not indicate and provide private outdoor amenity space. The northern section of the application site has been subdivided, Newport House, the attached two storey dwelling has a rear amenity garden with a patio area directly behind the 2 storey dwelling and external steps leading to a grass area. This is shown in the site pictures below and on the eastern blue line boundary in the site plan. This area is not fenced off, it is within the blue line boundary of this application and lies adjacent to an existing parking area with areas of stone/gravel to indicate parking. The western blue boundary area on the other hand is also under the same ownership of the applicant and has a patio area on the lower level as well. Whereas the red line boundary of this application has a long strip of access to the parking area on the rear. As existing, the single dwelling does not have private rear amenity space. No amenity space has been proposed as part of this application.

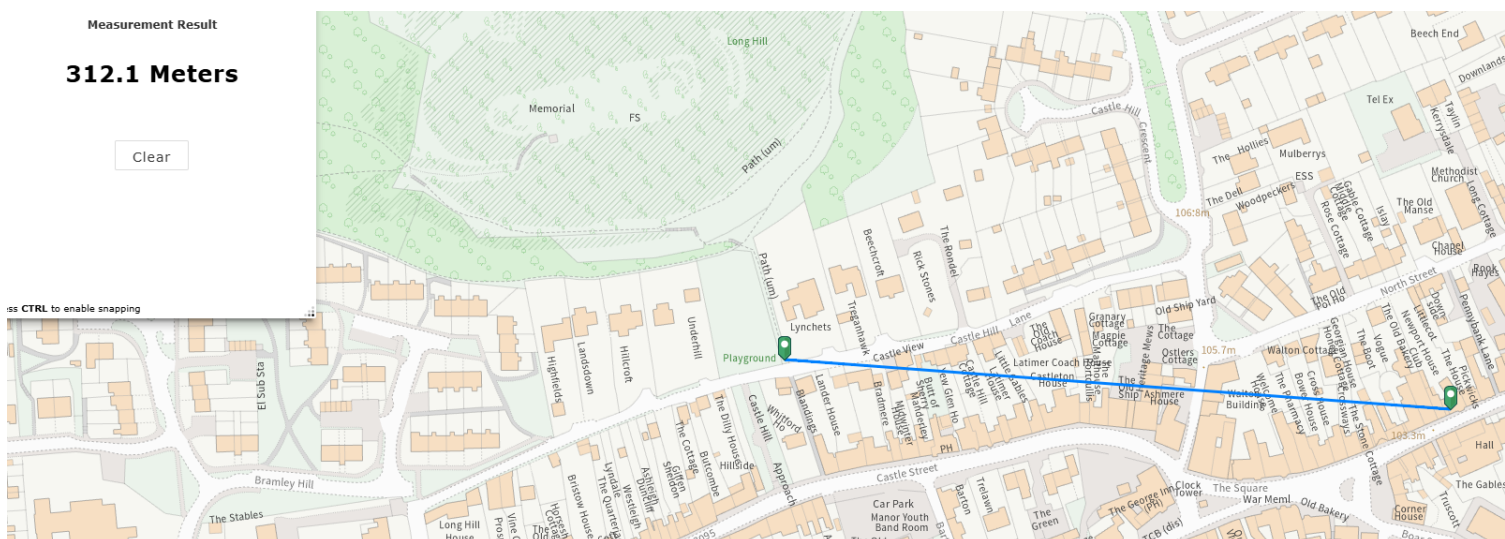
Wiltshire Core Strategy and Wiltshire Design Guide does not set a specific minimum private garden or amenity-space standard for flat conversions. Instead, the guidance takes a design-led approach focused on the quality of residential environments and the health and wellbeing of occupants.

CP57 of the WCS states: *A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings.*

vii. having regard to the compatibility of adjoining buildings and uses, the impact on the amenities of existing occupants, and ensuring that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself, including the consideration of privacy, overshadowing, vibration, and pollution (e.g. light intrusion, noise, smoke, fumes, effluent, waste or litter

9.2 Private Amenity Space from WDG states:

9.2.8 For apartments the requirement for a communal residents' garden may be foregone if it can be demonstrated that there is access to local open space within 480m, as per Fields in Trust guidance.



Lastly, the Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS) sets minimum internal floor areas for dwellings, bedrooms, storage and floor-to-ceiling heights. The floor area of Apartment 1 is approximately 40 square metres, while the floor area of Apartment 2 is approximately 75 square metres.

Whilst the proposal would not provide private outdoor amenity space for future occupiers, the application site does not have allocated rear amenity space as existing, having regard to the site's town-centre location within Mere, the limited scale of the conversion, and the availability of nearby public open space and local services, the absence of such provision would not, in this instance, result in unacceptable living conditions sufficient to warrant refusal. In this instance, the assessment has taken into account the size, layout, outlook and overall living conditions of the proposed apartments rather than by reference to a fixed amenity-space requirement.

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).

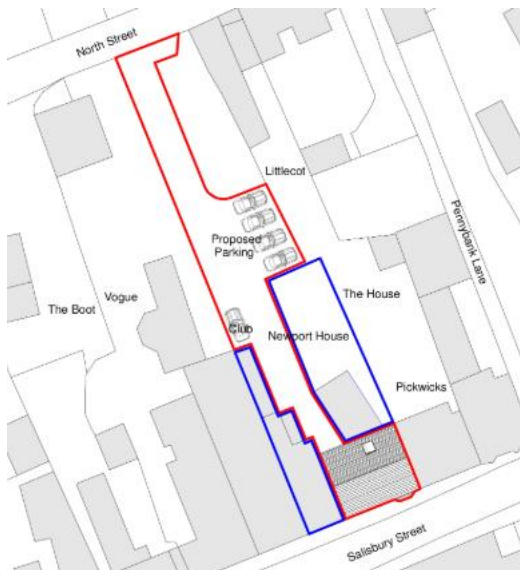
Where necessary, Transport Assessments or Statements should be submitted to evaluate impacts and identify mitigation. Planning conditions or legal agreements may be used to secure off-site improvements, travel plans, or contributions to sustainable transport infrastructure.

The standards follow:

Bedrooms	Minimum Spaces
1	1 space
2 to 3	2 spaces
4+	3 spaces
Visitor Parking	0.2 spaces per dwelling (unallocated)

Assessment

The LPA's highways officer has no objection to the proposed conversion of the application site from a single 3-bedroom dwelling to the creation of two apartments being one one-bedroom and one two-bedroom apartment subject to the provision of one space for the one-bedroom dwelling and two spaces for the two-bedroom dwelling. The application site benefits from an existing access and parking provision along North Street which leads to a gravel driveway. The submitted block plan has indicated that there are 5 vehicles that can be accommodated in the existing shared parking area. A condition has been included in the recommendation to indicate that three car parking spaces should be provided on site for the lifetime of the development specifically for the use of the 2 apartments.



Ecology and Biodiversity

The application site consists of an existing dwelling which is proposed to be split and converted into 2 apartments. To facilitate this conversion, no external works are proposed. As the application site is already residential use, it is not considered that the conversion would have an impact on protected species different to the existing usage. However, under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, it is an offence to harm or disturb bats or damage or destroy their roosts. Planning permission for development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation.

Additionally, the application site is not located within River Avon SAC. Therefore the addition of one dwelling in this location is not subject to ecological mitigation.

Lastly, Biodiversity Net Gain is mandatory from 12th February 2024 (Major sites) and 2nd April 2024 (minor sites). Under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) applications are required to deliver 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). It applies to most but not all development. However, this application does not propose any additional footprint, therefore, based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is

begun because the permission which has been granted is for development, which is exempt being below the de minimis threshold, meaning development which:

- i. does not impact an onsite priority habitat (a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006); and
- ii. impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat (as defined in the statutory metric).

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 provision of additional housing in a town centre location is welcomed, and with due consideration to the Council's current lack of 5 year housing land supply. There are no harms identified through the development in terms of heritage impacts, amenity impacts or highway safety subject to the conditions included in the recommendation below.

The proposed development is not considered to have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area and adjacent heritage assets and therefore accords with the above listed policies and guidance.

RECOMMENDATION: That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to conditions.

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

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

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

Location Plan Drawing No. 25/053/01 Received: 07 May 2026

Proposed Block Plan Drawing No. 25/053/03 Rev A Received: 02 July 2026

Proposed Arrangements Drawing No. 25/053/05 Received: 27 April 2026

Planning Statement Received: 27 April 2026

Heritage Statement Received: 27 April 2026

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

3. No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until [3] car parking spaces have been provided for the proposed apartments in accordance with Proposed Block Plan Drawing No. 25/053/03. The areas shall always be maintained for those purposes thereafter for the lifetime of the development.

REASON: In the interests of highway safety.