

APPLICATION FOR HOUSEHOLDER PLANNING PERMISSION DELEGATED REPORT

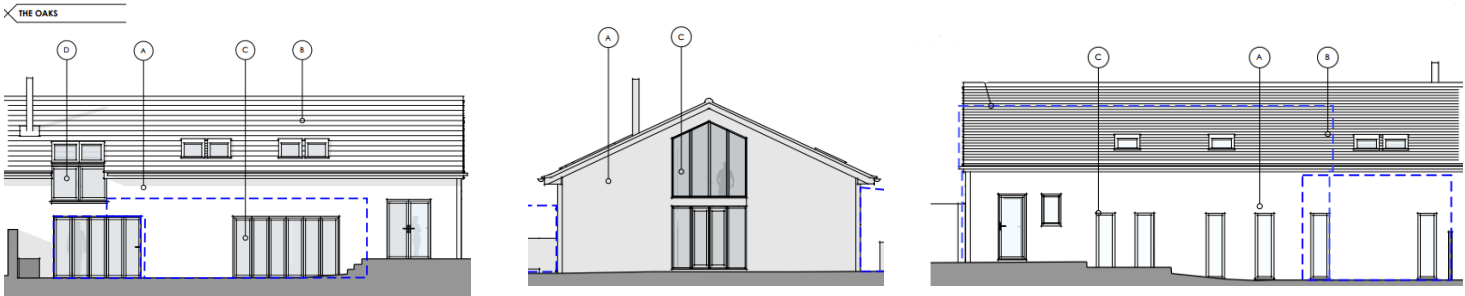
APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/02753
APPLICATION TYPE:	Householder planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	The Oaks, Lower Woodrow, Forest, Melksham, SN12 7RB
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Extension and alterations to existing house
RECOMMENDATION:	That Planning Permission be GRANTED

PROPOSAL

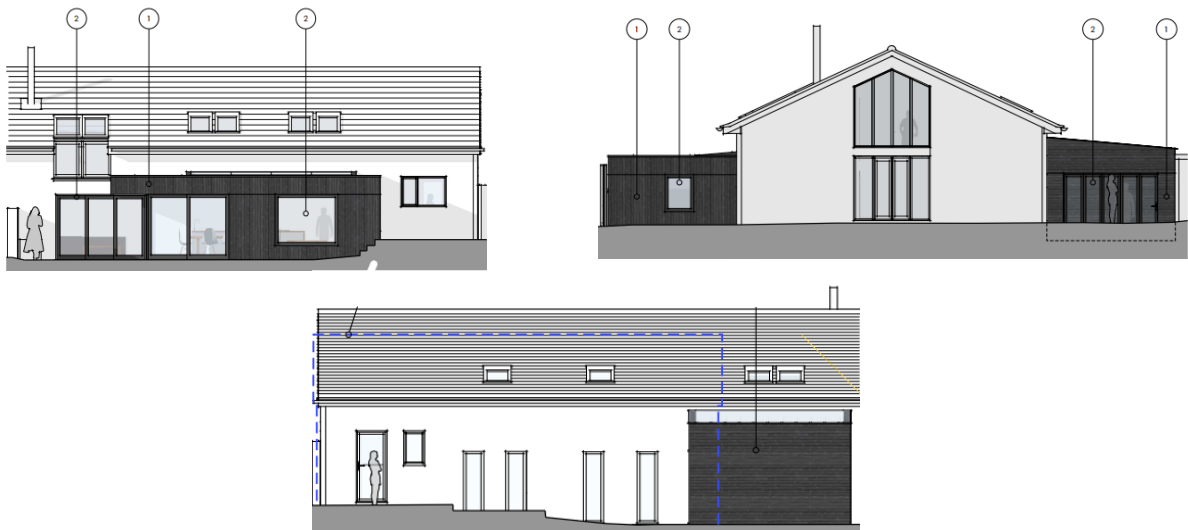
The proposal seeks planning permission for single storey extensions and alterations to the property. The application is submitted using Householder application forms.

During the course of the application, a revised red line was submitted as originally non-residential land was included within the red line when the application is seeking Householder planning permission. A location plan with a reduced red line was submitted which just encompassed the residential curtilage, with the remainder of the land ownership outlined in blue.

The extracts below demonstrate the existing appearance of the dwelling, together with the proposed appearance subject to this application:



(L-R) Existing Side, Front and Side Elevations



(L-R) Proposed Side, Front and Side Elevations

The proposed extensions would both be single storey and would be positioned on opposing side walls of the dwelling but would be of marginally different footprints, with both wholly contained within the residential curtilage. To the NW side elevation, the extension would in-fill the current vacant space between the dwelling and an existing freestanding oil store, effectively hard up to the boundary with the adjacent property, The Willows, and would enable the creation of an external store directly off of the existing courtyard. This extension would have a very gentle sloping roof, with the exterior finished in black weatherboard timber cladding with powder coated aluminium sliding doors for access to the courtyard plus a sedum planted roof. The roof of the extension would be positioned lower than the existing eaves to the main dwelling.

The other extension is to the opposing SE side elevation and would enable the creation of a dining area directly off of the existing kitchen. The extension would display a flat roof which is positioning beneath the existing eaves, with a stepped-down section to the far end due to the existing cabrio balcony window above. This extension would also be finished in black weatherboard timber cladding and also features a sedum planted flat roof, with fenestration proposed to all 3 sides with a combination of sliding doors and a large and small casement window.

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The property known as The Oaks is a former agricultural barn which was subject to a change of use under previous planning application 17/06321/PNCOU, with the barn subdivided to create two dwellings – The Oaks and The Willows. The building is located in a largely rural setting in the hamlet of Forest, approximately 0.5km east of the settlement boundary for Melksham and Bowerhill Village and is accessed via a private track from the main road. There is a Public Right of Way (PRoW) 'WELW47' which is to the north of the site but which does not cross the site. The building benefits from a generous plot forming both residential and agricultural land to the front and sides of the building, whilst the appearance of the building remaining close to its original form as a barn, clad in black weatherboard timber. The surrounding area is predominantly agricultural with a number of barns, agricultural buildings and outbuildings within the vicinity, with parcels of agricultural land surrounding and beyond.



The application site is subject to the following planning policy constraints:

- Countryside Character Areas – Avon Vales
- Negligible Risk from Groundwater Flooding
- Public Right of Way (PRoW) 'WELW47'

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
15/03555/PNCOU - Prior Notification for a change of use of Agricultural Building to Dwellinghouse (Resubmission) – PRIOR APPROVAL REFUSED 08.06.15
16/01744/PNCOU - Prior notification under Class Q for proposed change of use of agricultural building to 2 dwellings and associated works – PRIOR APPROVAL REFUSED 19.04.16
16/06984/PNCOU - Prior notification under Class Q for proposed change of use of agricultural building to 2 dwellings and associated works (resubmission of 16/01744/PNCOU) – PRIOR APPROVAL GRANTED 08.09.16
17/03655/PNCOU - Prior notification under Class Q for proposed change of use of agricultural building to 2 dwellings and associated works (resubmission of 16/06984/PNCOU) – PRIOR APPROVAL REFUSED 06.06.17
17/06321/PNCOU - Prior notification under Class Q for proposed change of use of agricultural building to 2 dwellings and associated works (resubmission of 17/03655/PNCOU) – PRIOR APPROVAL GRANTED 24.08.17

RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Wiltshire Core Strategy

- Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy
- Core Policy 15: Spatial Strategy for the Melksham Community Area
- Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;

The 'made' Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 (2020-2038)

- Policy 18: Landscape Character
- Policy 20: Locally Distinctive, High Quality Design

Melksham Design Guidelines and Codes

Wiltshire Design Guide

- Appendix D – Design Guidance for Householder extensions

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- Section 12: Achieving Well Designed Places

The Planning Practice Guidance

National Design Guide

ISSUES

- Design and appearance
- Landscape impact
- Amenity

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Melksham Without Parish Council: No objection.

REPRESENTATIONS

The application was publicised by direct neighbour letter. During the application process, it became apparent that unfortunately the adjoining neighbour, 'The Willows' had erroneously been omitted from being consulted on the proposal. This was rectified with the issuing of a consultation letter to this neighbour. No comments have been received.

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 adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and, where applicable, any made Neighbourhood Plans.

Design and appearance

WCS Core Policy 57 requires development to respond positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, elevational design and materials, with particular regard required for the compatibility of the design with the host dwelling and its surroundings, together with the relationship to adjoining buildings and spaces.

Policy 20 of the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan requires development proposals that contribute positively to the conservation, enhancement and extension of the quality and local distinctiveness of the neighbourhood area.

Section 12 of the NPPF expects a good standard of design that is visually attractive, functionally effective and contributed to the quality of the built environment, whilst the Wiltshire Design Guide elaborates on WCS Core Policy 57 and requires consideration that should be given to the external appearance, design and materials used for development to encourage sensitivity to the local character.

The proposed side extensions will result in increased bulk and mass to the dwelling, with the overall scale of the extensions restricted due to the single-storey built form. Whilst the increase in footprint is substantial, it is not considered excessive in the context of the site. The main building is set deep within its plot, recessed from the front entrance gates and when viewed on approach, the breath and positioning of the extensions result in a balanced appearance given the similar projection and scale of their built form. The proposed height of the extensions respect the existing eaves of the property, with their overall form and appearance remaining subservient in nature to the main dwelling. Whilst the chosen materials and extensive glazing is considered modern, so too is the overarching character and appearance of the barn since its permitted conversion, thereby the chosen materials will align with the existing material palette of the building as a whole, enabling the proposed works to integrate within this setting.

The overall site and land ownership is generous and despite the extensions being substantial in scale, overall the proposed footprints are considered proportionate to the main dwelling and its plot and will not result in a cramped, overdeveloped or incongruous appearance, broadly sympathising with the main building and its locality. The resulting appearance respects the wider agricultural context and history of the site, remaining in-keeping with this rural area.

Furthermore, the proposed extensions would sit solely within the residential curtilage. The revised location plan confirms the extent of the residential land ownership as well as the wider land ownership beyond, and comparisons with the proposed block plan confirm the extensions would sit wholly within the residential curtilage.

Collectively, by reason of the scale, design, positioning and proposed materials, the proposed works are considered acceptable and would not result in unacceptable visual impact. The proposed extensions would integrate and align with the existing character and appearance of the property and would not be considered incongruous or an inappropriate form of development within this location. The extensions would remain subservient to the main building and would not be considered overdevelopment in the context of the site. Therefore it is considered that the proposal complies with the design principles set out in Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, Policy 20 of the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan, Appendix D of the Wiltshire Design Guide and section 12 of the NPPF.

Landscape impact

Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires all development to protect, conserve, and where possible enhance the character and quality of Wiltshire's landscapes, giving particular weight to designated areas such as National Landscapes.

Whilst the site is not located within any specific designated area, landscape impact remains a relevant consideration for applications which propose new built form within the countryside. Whilst the application site is located some distance from the main road, it occupies a relatively open site in a largely rural location. The proposed extensions are not considered to result in unacceptable visual impact on the rural character of the area. The main building is a former agricultural barn that has already been sensitively converted to residential use, and the extension has been designed to remain clearly subordinate to the original structure in terms of its scale, massing and appearance. The proposal would be read as a natural addition to the existing dwelling and would not appear incongruous within its rural setting. Furthermore, the use of complementary materials would help ensure that the development integrates successfully into the surrounding landscape, preserving the character and appearance of the countryside and the rural nature of this location.

The proposal, by virtue of its scale, siting and design would not give rise to unacceptable harm to the rural landscape and scenic character of the locality, and therefore the development complies with Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Paragraph 187 of the NPPF.

Amenity

Point vii of Core Policy 57 - Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that developments do not adversely affect neighbouring properties.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly Paragraph 135(f), stresses that planning decisions should ensure developments provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

The Willows, the only residential property located in close proximity to the application site, forms the second dwelling within the converted barn development. The protection of residential amenity is a key material planning consideration and significant weight has therefore been afforded to the potential impacts of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupants of The Willows.

Whilst views of the proposed extensions may be available from The Willows, the store extension would occupy an existing gap between the dwelling and an existing oil tank outbuilding but would be hard-up to the boundary. The increased built form would remain single storey and be positioned beneath the existing eaves, with no additional fenestration serving the external store which would overlook the boundary.

The proposed dining room extension would be set slightly back from the shared boundary, with the existing courtyard providing a degree of separation and serving as both a physical and visual buffer between the development and the neighbouring property. Whilst the extension would incorporate fenestration within the elevation facing the boundary, the presence of the existing boundary wall would substantially restrict direct views, thereby reducing the potential for overlooking and safeguarding neighbouring privacy. Furthermore, the extension would remain single storey in scale, limiting its visual presence and preventing any material loss of privacy or perception of overlooking.

Whilst the extensions would collectively increase bulk and mass, their single storey form would mitigate against any overshadowing or overbearing effects. The extensions would not be positioned in closer proximity to the shared boundary than existing structures within the curtilage, respecting the current separation distances and therefore helping to avoid a sense of enclosure or overbearing effects given the spatial relationship between the dwellings.

Therefore overall, taking into account the height, scale, mass and positioning of the extensions, it is considered that the works will not result in unacceptable impact on neighbouring amenity, nor it is expected to result in unacceptable loss of light, overshadowing or overbearing effects. No objections have been received by neighbouring properties, therefore the proposal complies with WCS Core Policy 57 and Appendix D of the Wiltshire Design Guide, as an appropriate level of amenity can be achieved.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Householder planning applications are exempt from the requirement to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain under Schedule 7A, Section 4(2)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as inserted by the Environment Act 2021.

CONCLUSION

By reason of the proposed scale, design and proposed materials, the proposed works are considered acceptable and would not result in unacceptable visual impact. The proposed extensions would be sympathetic to and broadly align with the existing character and appearance of the main building as well as the agricultural context of the site, as well as being proportionate to the existing built form of the building and its plot. Additionally, the proposed works are not considered to result in unacceptable visual impact from the surrounding area, given the rural setting of the site and the relative openness of the locality. Furthermore, the proposed works are not considered to result in unacceptable harm to the residential amenity of the adjoining neighbour.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2, the Wiltshire Design Guide and the relevant provisions within the National Planning Policy Framework. As such, the application is recommended for approval, subject to the conditions set out below.

RECOMMENDATION: That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to conditions.

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

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

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

305.3.100 – Proposed Block Plan received 11.05.26

305.3.110 – Proposed Ground Floor Plan received 11.05.26

305.3.120 – Proposed North East and South East Elevations received 11.05.26

305.3.121 – Proposed North West and South West Elevations received 11.05.26

305.3.130 – Proposed 3D Views received 11.05.26

Location Plan received 23.06.26

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