

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/03005
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Project SEMH, Station Approach, Melksham, SN12 8BN
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Change of use from Class E (offices) to a combined use of class E(offices) and F1 (Learning and Non-Residential Institutions)
RECOMMENDATION:	That Planning Permission be GRANTED

PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks planning permission for Class E - Commercial Business and Service (Class Eg Offices, R&D and Light Industry), to a combination of Class E and Class F1 - Learning and Non- Residential Institutions. There will be no external changes to the building nor any internal changes proposed to the existing floor layout.

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The site is located towards the southern end of Station Approach being triangular in shape with a northern spur providing up to 6 car parking spaces. The building is a single storey 1960's block which as noted is owned by Wiltshire Council. Access to the site is via Station Approach.

The area immediately surrounding the site is mixed with a depot to the north and the station buildings to the west. The eastern site boundary is adjacent to existing housing.

RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Wiltshire Core Strategy:

- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
- Core Policy 61: Transport and New Development

Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan

Wiltshire Design Guide: Appendix D – Design Guidance for Householder extensions

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The Planning Practice Guidance

National Design Guide

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Melksham Town Council: No objection

Wiltshire Council Highways: No objection

REPRESENTATIONS

No comments were 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.

Principle of Development

In this instance the proposal is wholly located within the settlement boundary of Melksham, where there is a presumption in favour of development. The application site is located within an established industrial/commercial usage as such the proposal when compared against the requirements of CP35 of the WCS, is considered to be acceptable in principle.

As such, the principle of development is considered acceptable, subject to the detailed assessment of design, amenity, and other material considerations set out below.

Design and Impact upon the upon the character and context of the area

Core Policy 57 - Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that all new development is of high design quality, reflecting local context, character, and distinctiveness.

No alterations are proposed to the building and as such the scale and design of the building is unchanged.

Having regard to the above, the proposal complies with the design principles set out in Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan and Appendix D of the Wiltshire Design Guide.

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 proposed development has been assessed in terms of its potential impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties, with particular regard to loss of light, overshadowing, loss of privacy, and overbearing effects.

Due to the lack of physical alterations it is considered that the proposal would not result in unacceptable amenity impacts in terms of overlooking, loss of light, overbearing impact or privacy. Furthermore, due to the location of the building in question and its proximity to other commercial/business units it is not considered that any resulting noise from the proposal would be an unacceptable amenity impact.

The proposal therefore accords with Core Policy 57 point vii in respect of safeguarding residential amenity and Appendix D of the Wiltshire Design Guide.

Highways Impact

Core Policy 57 (xiv) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that development must meet the requirements of Core Policy 61. This policy requires proposals to be capable of being served by safe access to the highway network. Core Policy 64 seeks to ensure compliance with parking standards set out in the Local Transport Plan.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly Paragraph 115 and 116, requires that development proposals do not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety and that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users.

The supporting statement advises the site is proposed to be used as a mentoring hub for young people aged 5 to 25 with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, with mentors collecting the learners from their homes or schools to attend the facility for activities. It is advised that there would be approximately 4 to 8 learners in the building at any one time.

The facility would also accommodate office space for the senior leadership team. Given the limited number of attendees and the small-scale nature of the operation, the overall trip generation is expected to be modest.

Taking these characteristics into account, the proposal is still considered comparable in scale to a low-intensity office use, and unlikely to result in a material increase in traffic generation relative to the lawful or previous use of the site.

The site is located on the edge of Melksham Town Centre within a commercial area, which

also provides access to Melksham Train Station. There are footway connections to the local facilities within the town centre, and access to other public transport facilities. The site is therefore considered to be sustainably located in transport terms.

There are 6 existing car parking spaces associated with the application site, which will remain available for use of staff. It is also noted that there is a Council car park to the north of the site offering additional parking, if required.

Given the scale of the use, the on-site parking is expected to accommodate staff requirements, with short-stay pick-up/drop-off activity being managed on-site or within the immediate vicinity. While no detailed parking accumulation data has been provided, the level of activity associated with 4–8 learners and associated staff presence is considered unlikely to generate parking demand that would exceed the available provision or result in severe highway impact. The reliance on nearby public parking is noted, and given the town centre location, this is considered a reasonable and typical arrangement.

Having regard to the sustainable location of the site, the modest scale of the proposed use, the retention of existing access and parking arrangements, and the limited anticipated impact on the highway network, it is considered that the development would not result in a severe or unacceptable impact on highway safety or capacity, in accordance with national and local planning policy. Adequate parking and turning provision is provided in accordance with Wiltshire's adopted parking standards, and access arrangements are acceptable.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Core Policies 57 (xiv), 61 and 64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the NPPF, and the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan and the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan.

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

The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its design, scale, and relationship with the surrounding area. It would not result in any unacceptable harm to the character of the locality, the amenities of neighbouring occupiers, or the interests of highway safety.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the Wiltshire Local Plan, and 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.

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.

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

Planning Statement

Existing Floor Plan

Site Plan

Fire Evacuation Plan

Location Plan

(Received by LPA 27th May 2026)

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