
COOMBE DOWN FARM

Blandford Road, Coombe Bissett, Wiltshire, SP5 4LJ

Planning Statement in support of an application for the addition of an external door at first-floor level, extension of the landing area to the existing balcony and associated external access works serving the approved ancillary residential accommodation

Applicant: Mr. and Mrs Kishere

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8th July 2026



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Sean Williams, a Chartered Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI). I have over twenty years' professional planning experience, including strategic-level roles within local government and several years' experience as an independent planning consultant working with architects and private clients.

1.2 This Statement supports an application for limited alterations to the external access arrangements serving the approved ancillary residential accommodation at Coombe Down Farm. It considers the proposal in the context of the earlier permissions for the accommodation and existing balcony, together with the current occupation and operation of the wider site.

2.0 Summary of Proposed Development

2.1 Planning permission is sought for the addition of an external door at first-floor level, an extension to the landing area of the existing balcony and associated external access works serving the ancillary residential accommodation at Coombe Down Farm. The accommodation was approved under planning permission PL/2022/02111, with the existing balcony and external staircase subsequently approved under planning permission PL/2023/07449.

2.2 The application does not seek permission for a separate unrestricted dwellinghouse. The accommodation remains occupied in association with the operation and management of the established garage business at Coombe Down Farm.

2.3 The proposal represents a relatively minor alteration to the existing access arrangements associated with the approved accommodation and does not materially alter the overall character or appearance of the existing building or wider operational site.

3.0 Site Description

3.1 Coombe Down Farm is located adjacent to Blandford Road on the outskirts of Coombe Bissett, outside the defined settlement boundary and within the open countryside. The site accommodates an established MOT, vehicle servicing and repair business together with associated yard, parking, storage and operational areas. Agricultural and contracting activities are also undertaken from the wider holding under the same ownership and management.

3.2 The application relates to the existing two-storey garage/workshop building. The ground floor contains the commercial workshop, MOT and office/reception facilities, whilst the first floor comprises the ancillary residential accommodation approved under planning permission PL/2022/02111. The accommodation is occupied by the owners/directors responsible for the day-to-day operation and management of the business.

3.3 Access is taken directly from Blandford Road, with parking and circulation arrangements shared across the site. The application building forms part of the established group of commercial and agricultural buildings at Coombe Down Farm rather than an isolated building within the wider countryside.

3.4 Planning permission PL/2023/07449 subsequently approved the existing external balcony and staircase together with additional windows serving the first-floor accommodation.

3.5 The surrounding area is predominantly rural in character, comprising a mixture of open countryside, sporadic built development and agricultural land uses.

3.6 The site lies within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape and the River Avon SAC catchment area but is otherwise not subject to any site-specific heritage designation affecting the application building.

4.0 Site photographs



4.1 Existing balcony showing the location of the proposed landing extension and external door. The opening at the proposed door position is visible.



4.2 Above: Views of the existing balcony and external staircase.



4.3 Internal views showing the former stair position at ground-floor level and the corresponding area within the first-floor accommodation where the stair previously emerged.

5.0 Relevant Planning History

PL/2025/09224 - Addition of external door on first floor and extension of landing area to existing balcony – Withdrawn.

PL/2023/07449 - Formation of balcony with external stairs and two new windows – Approved.

PL/2022/02111 - Change of use of first floor store into small living accommodation – Approved.

6.0 Previous approval of external access arrangements.

6.1 Planning permission PL/2023/07449 approved the formation of an external balcony and staircase together with bifold doors and additional windows serving the approved first-floor ancillary residential accommodation.

6.2 The delegated officer report accompanying that permission is directly relevant to the current application. In assessing the proposal, the Council considered the external staircase, balcony arrangement, bifold-door access and the improved natural light and outlook associated with the accommodation. The overall scale of the development was considered modest and the Council concluded that the proposed works would not result in visual or other material planning harm. In relation to access onto the balcony, the report specifically concluded that the bifold doors were not considered to cause harm.

6.3 The officer report also recognised the established nature of the accommodation, its occupation by the owners of the garage business and its continued relationship with that business. The subsequent permission retained the existing controls over occupation and required the accommodation to remain within the same planning unit as the associated commercial use.

6.4 The Council therefore accepted the external balcony and staircase whilst leaving unchanged the occupancy and planning-unit controls governing the ancillary nature of the accommodation. That is material because it demonstrates that external access was not previously regarded as incompatible with continued compliance with the occupancy restriction or retention of the accommodation within the wider planning unit.

6.5 The previous permission also established the acceptability in principle of an external route serving the approved accommodation. In practical terms, the balcony and staircase already provide an external means of day-to-day access. The current proposal does not alter the

underlying occupation or functional relationship of the accommodation with the garage business, but seeks only to provide an external door and a modest extension to the existing balcony landing, thereby improving that access arrangement.

6.6 The proposal does not seek to vary or remove the existing occupancy or planning-unit controls. The central consideration remains the actual nature of the occupation of the accommodation and its continuing relationship with the wider business at Coombe Down Farm, rather than the precise form of circulation or access serving the first floor.

7.0 Assessment of Material Planning Considerations

7.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In determining an application, section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires the Council to have regard to the provisions of the development plan and to any other material considerations. The relevant development plan policies are contained within the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and the Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan 2023–2038. The National Planning Policy Framework is also a material consideration.

7.2 The principal material considerations are:

- Nature and Extent of the Approved Ancillary Residential Accommodation
- Evolution of the access arrangements
- Retention of a single planning unit and compliance with Condition 2 of PL/2022/02111
- Principle of development
- Character, Appearance and Landscape Impact

- Residential amenity
- Ecology and Nutrient Neutrality.

Nature and Extent of the Approved Ancillary Residential Accommodation

7.3 Planning permission PL/2022/02111 established the lawful principle of ancillary residential accommodation at first floor level above the existing commercial garage and MOT premises at Coombe Down Farm. The permission authorised the change of use of the first floor store area to a small unit of ancillary residential accommodation subject to occupancy restrictions controlling its continued relationship to the wider commercial use of the site.

7.4 The approved accommodation was self-contained in nature from the outset, containing the facilities ordinarily associated with day-to-day residential occupation including living, sleeping, kitchen and bathroom facilities. The accommodation nevertheless remained tied to and functionally associated with the operation of the wider commercial premises through the occupancy condition imposed as part of the original permission.

7.5 The originally approved layout included an enclosed internal stair rising from the ground-floor office/workshop area to the first-floor accommodation. The stair enclosure and associated landing formed part of the approved access and circulation arrangements serving the accommodation and were not unrelated areas of operational commercial floorspace.

7.6 The functional relationship of that area to the accommodation was also reflected in the fact that the stair enclosure accommodated the boiler serving the residential accommodation, whilst storage space above the enclosure was accessed directly from within the accommodation itself.

7.7 The former internal stair has since been removed and the opening incorporated into the revised first-floor layout. Those works affect only the interior of the building and are shown on

the current drawings solely to provide an accurate record of the building as it now exists. They do not form part of the development for which planning permission is sought.

7.8 Although the infilling of the former stair opening has resulted in a modest increase in usable first-floor area, it has not involved the extension of the residential use into unrelated ground-floor commercial accommodation. The altered area lies within the existing building envelope and relates to space which previously formed part of the access, circulation and ancillary servicing arrangements associated with the approved accommodation.

7.9 The development for which planning permission is sought is therefore the addition of the external door and the extension of the existing balcony landing. The proposal does not create a new residential unit or extend the accommodation into separate operational commercial floorspace.

Evolution of the access arrangements

7.10 The original access arrangement required the occupants to pass through the garage and office areas when entering or leaving the accommodation. In practice, this created difficulties associated with security, alarm systems and access outside normal business hours.

7.11 The arrangement also meant that the internal access route passed through an operational commercial garage. Independent fire-safety advice obtained in May 2026 (Appendix A) explains that removal of the internal stair, together with the associated compartmentation works, has improved the separation between the residential accommodation and the commercial premises.

7.12 The report notes that the former stair discharged through the garage environment, whereas the accommodation is now enclosed within construction providing 60 minutes' fire

resistance. It concludes that the revised arrangement provides materially improved protection for the occupants of the accommodation.

7.13 The fire-safety report is not relied upon as determining the planning merits of the proposal. It does, however, explain the practical and safety considerations which led to the revised access arrangement. The existing balcony and external staircase approved under planning permission PL/2023/07449 already provide an established external route serving the accommodation, which the proposed door and landing extension would improve.

Retention of a single planning unit and compliance with condition 2 of PL/2022/02111

7.14 Condition 2 attached to planning permission PL/2022/02111 restricts the occupation of the approved residential accommodation to persons employed in connection with the associated MOT and vehicle repair business and further requires the accommodation to remain within the same planning unit as the associated commercial use.

7.15 Condition 2 states:

“The occupation of the living accommodation hereby permitted shall be limited to a person solely or mainly employed, or last employed, in the associated MOT and vehicle repair business at Coombe Down Farm, or a widow or widower of such a person, and to any resident dependants.”

“The living accommodation shall remain within the same planning unit as the associated commercial use and shall not be sold, leased or otherwise separately occupied as an independent planning unit.”

7.16 The condition therefore controls two related matters: the persons entitled to occupy the accommodation and its continued relationship with the wider commercial planning unit. It does

not prescribe a particular means of access to the accommodation or require the permanent retention of an internal connection between the first-floor accommodation and the commercial premises below.

7.17 The identification of the relevant planning unit is ultimately a matter of fact and degree and involves an exercise of planning judgment. In *Burdle v Secretary of State for the Environment* [1972] 1 WLR 1207, the Court identified the unit of occupation as a useful starting point unless a smaller area can properly be regarded as accommodating a separate use both physically and functionally. The Court of Appeal subsequently confirmed in *Manchester City Council v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government* [2021] EWCA Civ 1920 that the identification of the appropriate planning unit is itself a planning judgment informed by well-established principles, including those in *Burdle*.

7.18 The assessment must therefore have regard to the actual pattern of occupation and control, together with the physical and functional relationship between the accommodation and the wider commercial use. The means by which the accommodation is accessed is a relevant physical consideration, but it is not determinative in isolation. Nor does the provision of independent living facilities or an external entrance necessarily establish that a separate planning unit has been created.

7.19 In the present case:

- the accommodation and associated commercial premises remain under the same ownership and overall control;

- the accommodation is occupied by the owners/directors responsible for the day-to-day operation and management of the garage business;

- occupation remains directly connected with the associated MOT and vehicle repair business in accordance with Condition 2;
- there is no separate tenancy, lease, disposal or severance of occupation;
- the accommodation remains physically located at first-floor level directly above the commercial premises;
- access, parking and circulation arrangements remain shared with and integrated into the wider operational site; and
- the occupants continue to use, manage and exercise day-to-day control over the commercial premises as part of the ongoing business.

7.20 Those are substantive occupational and functional links rather than matters of ownership alone. The occupation of the accommodation continues to arise from, and remain directly associated with, the occupants' responsibility for the operation and management of the garage business. The accommodation therefore continues to perform the ancillary residential function for which permission was granted.

7.21 It is also relevant that the approved accommodation was self-contained in residential terms from the outset, containing the living, sleeping, kitchen and bathroom facilities required for day-to-day occupation. Its ability to function as residential accommodation independently of the internal areas of the garage is therefore not a new characteristic arising from the current proposal. The principal physical change concerns the route by which the accommodation is accessed.

7.22 The removal of the former internal stair and the use of the previously approved external balcony and staircase have altered the circulation arrangements serving the accommodation,

but have not altered the underlying pattern of ownership, occupation, management or functional association with the garage business. The accommodation has not been separately let, disposed of or occupied independently of the commercial use.

7.23 Planning permission PL/2023/07449 already approved an external balcony and staircase serving the accommodation whilst retaining the existing controls over occupation and the requirement for the accommodation to remain within the same planning unit. The current proposal does not seek to vary or remove those controls but relates only to the addition of an external door and the limited extension of the existing balcony landing.

7.24 Viewed in the round, the accommodation has not become a separate residential planning unit. Although physically self-contained, it is neither occupied nor used independently of the garage business. Its continuing occupation, management and functional relationship with that business demonstrate that it remains within the same planning unit as the associated commercial use and continues to comply with both the wording and purpose of Condition 2.

Principle of Development

7.25 The application site forms part of an established and lawful mixed-use operational site containing a long-standing MOT, vehicle servicing and repair business together with associated operational activities. Planning permission PL/2022/02111 established the principle of ancillary residential accommodation at first-floor level associated with the commercial use, whilst planning permission PL/2023/07449 subsequently approved the external balcony and staircase serving that accommodation. The current proposal does not therefore seek to establish a new residential use, but relates to limited alterations to the external access arrangements serving accommodation which is already lawful.

7.26 For the reasons set out above, the proposal would not create a separate unrestricted dwellinghouse, subdivide the planning unit or sever the established functional and occupational

relationship between the accommodation and the wider commercial use. The accommodation remains occupied in association with the operation and management of the business at Coombe Down Farm and continues to perform the ancillary residential function for which permission was granted.

7.27 The proposal represents a modest alteration to the approved external access arrangements and would not materially alter the nature or planning status of the approved accommodation. Having regard to the established planning history, including the previous acceptance of the external balcony and staircase, the principle of the proposal is considered acceptable, subject to assessment of its detailed effects upon character, landscape and residential amenity.

7.28 Although compliance with Building Regulations is a separate matter from the determination of the planning application, the operational and fire-safety considerations set out at paragraphs 7.10–7.13 provide relevant context and demonstrate that the revised access arrangements have arisen from identified practical and safety considerations, rather than an intention to create an independent residential unit.

Impact on Character, Appearance and Landscape Setting

7.29 Core Policies 48, 51 and 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy collectively seek to ensure that development conserves landscape character, protects the scenic quality of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape and responds positively to local character and distinctiveness. Similar objectives are reflected within the Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan. Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 also requires the Council, in exercising functions affecting land within the National Landscape, to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty.

7.30 The proposal relates to a modest extension to an existing balcony together with the insertion of an external access door serving the approved first-floor ancillary residential

accommodation. The proposal represents a minor alteration to an already established built form and does not introduce a new freestanding structure or materially expand the overall visual presence of the building within the wider landscape.

7.31 The principle of the balcony and its visual effects have already been assessed and accepted by Wiltshire Council under planning permission PL/2023/07449. In considering that earlier proposal, the Council concluded that the development would not result in harm to the character or appearance of the area or to the wider landscape setting.

7.32 The application building is experienced as part of the wider group of commercial and agricultural buildings associated with the established operation at Coombe Down Farm rather than as an isolated domestic feature within the open countryside. The proposed alterations would therefore be read in the context of the existing operational site and would appear as a minor and subservient addition to the existing building.

7.33 In practice, opportunities for meaningful public views of the proposal are limited. The site is set back from Blandford Road (A354) and filtered by existing roadside vegetation and hedgerow planting. Furthermore, the local topography limits direct visibility into the site from the surrounding road network.

7.34 The proposal would similarly have a negligible visual effect in views from public rights of way and publicly accessible land. Public Footpath CBIS1 to the west is separated from the site by a substantial distance, intervening landform and existing vegetation. Public Footpath CBIS9, on the opposite side of the valley, experiences Coombe Down Farm within a broad panoramic landscape context at considerable distance. The land on that side of the valley forms part of Coombe Bissett Down, which is managed by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and is available for public access. The accompanying photographs, taken from the opposite ridge, demonstrate that the existing balcony is only just discernible even with the benefit of camera zoom. Given the

substantial separation distance, intervening vegetation and landform, the proposed landing extension and external door would not appear as prominent or defining features and would be experienced, at most, as a very limited alteration to the existing building group.



Above: As viewed looking east towards the application site (without zoom).



Above and below: As viewed towards the application site with the aid of camera zoom.



7.35 The proposal would not adversely affect the special qualities, scenic beauty or tranquillity of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape. The works are modest in scale, are closely associated with the existing building and would not materially alter the established commercial and operational character of Coombe Down Farm.

7.36 Having regard to the limited scale and visual extent of the proposal, the established planning history and the absence of any material effect upon wider views, the development would conserve the character and appearance of the area and the natural beauty of the National Landscape. It would therefore accord with Core Policies 48, 51 and 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant provisions of the Neighbourhood Plan, and would enable the Council to discharge its duty under section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Residential Amenity

7.37 Criterion vii of Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that development does not have an unacceptable impact upon the amenities of neighbouring occupiers whilst paragraph 135(f) of the National Planning Policy Framework requires planning decisions to secure a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

7.38 The current proposal relates to limited alterations to the already approved external access arrangements serving the first-floor ancillary residential accommodation. Planning permission PL/2023/07449 previously approved the external balcony and staircase arrangement associated with the accommodation, together with bifold door access onto the balcony area.

7.39 In assessing that earlier permission, the Council expressly considered the residential amenity implications associated with the balcony and external access arrangements. The delegated officer report concluded:

“The building is positioned within a substantial sized plot. The proposed balcony would have an outlook upon the open land to the front of the building and its access road. The closest residential property to the South (Beech Cottage) would be over 200m away. Therefore, the proposed additions are not considered to pose any detrimental effects upon any residential amenities.”

7.40 The current proposal does not materially alter that previously assessed relationship. The balcony and external staircase arrangements already exist on site and the current proposal principally relates to a limited extension to the landing area together with the addition of an external access door associated with the approved accommodation.

7.41 The nearest neighbouring dwelling to the north is Highfield, located approximately 57 metres from the application building. However, due to the separation distance involved, existing boundary treatment, the orientation of the buildings and the topography of the land, there are no direct or materially harmful overlooking relationships arising between the approved accommodation and Highfield.

7.42 Furthermore, the proposal would not result in any material intensification of activity beyond that already associated with the approved ancillary residential accommodation and existing balcony arrangement previously accepted by the Council.

7.43 Having regard to the modest nature of the proposal, the previously approved balcony arrangement and the separation distances involved, no unacceptable impact upon the amenities of neighbouring occupiers would arise.

Ecology

7.44 The proposal is limited to the addition of an external door and alterations to the previously approved balcony landing. It does not involve roof works, vegetation clearance or works

affecting any identified habitat feature. Having regard to the limited nature and location of the works, no material ecological effects are anticipated and no protected-species survey is considered necessary.

Nutrient Neutrality

7.45 The proposal does not create an additional residential unit, increase the level of overnight accommodation or result in any additional wastewater generation. It would therefore give rise to no increase in nutrient loading within the River Avon SAC catchment.

8.0 Conclusion

8.1 The application seeks planning permission for the addition of an external door at first-floor level, a limited extension to the landing area of the existing balcony and associated external access works serving the approved ancillary residential accommodation at Coombe Down Farm.

8.2 The external balcony and staircase were previously accepted under planning permission PL/2023/07449. The current proposal represents a logical evolution of that approved arrangement and has arisen in response to the practical, operational and fire-safety considerations described in this Statement.

8.3 The proposal would not create a separate unrestricted dwellinghouse or sever the established functional and occupational relationship between the accommodation and the garage business. The accommodation remains occupied in connection with the operation and management of that business, remains within the same planning unit and continues to perform the ancillary residential function for which planning permission was granted.

8.4 The proposed works would not result in material harm to the character and appearance of the site, the Cranborne Chase National Landscape, neighbouring residential amenity or ecological interests. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the Wiltshire Core

Strategy, the Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework, and planning permission should be granted.

9.0 - Appendix A – Fire Safety Consultancy Report – Stuart Ritchie MIFireE MIFSM – May 2026



Date: 21 May 2026



Fire Consultancy Report – PDK MOT Centre, Coombe Down Farm, Blandford Rd, Coombe Bisset, Salisbury SP5 4LJ

Introduction

On 20 May 2026, a visit was made to the above location to provide fire safety advice regarding the domestic accommodation within the commercial building's footprint. Access to the premises was provided by Mr & Mrs Phil Kishere.

The domestic accommodation is located on part of the first floor of the commercial building and measures approximately 15 metres by 5 metres. It is constructed from materials that provide a 60-minute fire-resistance rating to comply with building regulations. The original construction and building regulation approval for the building was in 2012. The 680m² building is constructed of a steel-framed structure with profile sheet steel elevations and roof. The commercial use of the building is as a garage, specialising in MOT testing.

This 75m² first-floor element provides a fully open-plan area that includes a lounge, kitchen, double bedroom, with an enclosed bathroom/toilet. The kitchen includes domestic-type electrical appliances, including an induction hob. The building is used as a permanent residential flat.

Legislation

Building Regulations 2010 Approved Document B Volume 1 – Dwellings, ISBN 978 1 85946 915 6.

Stuart Ritchie MIFireE MIFSM – 65 Highbury Avenue, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP2 7EY
Stuart Ritchie trading as: SR Fire Safety Consultancy

Means of Escape

The means of escape is primarily through the front door, which is accessed from the steel-and-aluminium veranda. There is a secondary means of escape from the sleeping area via a purpose-built, openable fire-escape window.



Previously, there was an internal staircase descending from the (now) bedroom area into the commercial lobby, which then opened to the outdoors. This staircase was protected by a 30-minute fire-resistant door opening into the garage area. The removal of this internal staircase and the making good of its removal with 60-minute fire-rated materials have significantly improved protection for the first floor, enhancing the safety and well-being of the residents. It should be noted that this internal staircase also housed the gas boiler.

The premises owner stated that a metal platform with steps is to be installed outside the new openable window, down to the ground-floor level.

Compartmentation

The domestic accommodation construction provides 60 minutes of fire resistance for the floor and walls; these walls extend to the full roof pitch height.

Fire Alarm/Detection

Fire detection is installed in all rooms of the domestic accommodation as part of the full building system. The system is a BS5839 Pt1 installation, installed to an assessed 'L3' standard, as defined. This is acceptable for this location.

Emergency Lighting

Emergency lighting is not required in domestic accommodation.

Fire Signage

Fire signage is not required in domestic accommodation.

Fire Extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are not required in domestic accommodation.

Heating

A gas boiler in the commercial area supplies hot water to the domestic accommodation. The original gas boiler has been removed from the domestic internal staircase.

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Recommendations

- Ensure the external platform and stairs under the means of escape window are constructed of steel and are fitted by a competent supplier. The design and construction are to accord with the requirements of Building Regulations ADB Volume 1 Dwellings, 2.17. This also means that the exit door directly underneath the proposed structure is replaced with an FD30 fire-rated door (30-minute fire-rated) fitted with a self-closing device.



- Ensure that any penetrations of the fire separation on the ground floor are made good with materials affording the same standard of fire resistance as the surrounding materials (60-minute).



Conclusion

The construction work and actions undertaken have significantly improved fire safety for the occupiers of the domestic accommodation. These are exemplified as being:

- Removal of the internal stairs by providing a direct egress through the fire escape window to open air via the (proposed) external metal platform and stairs. The removal of the internal staircase ensures that escape no longer places persons at risk by discharging via the lobby to the garage workshop.
- Fully enclosing the domestic accommodation in a 60-minute fire-resisting enclosure.
- Installing an induction hob in the kitchen area negates the potential incidents of fire.
- The installation of fire detection in all areas of the first floor as part of the wider building system. This ensures that any activations on the system alert the occupants of the flat, providing good notification to

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evacuate the premises and take appropriate action. It was confirmed that this system is serviced annually by Aurum Alarms Ltd and tested weekly.

- Removal of the gas boiler from the domestic area to the commercial area negates the potential incidents of fire.

It is considered that this domestic accommodation within the building envelope is constructed to a high standard ensuring full compartmentation from the commercial premises within the building, thereby ensuring the safety and well-being of persons within the flat.



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