

Design and Access Statement

Outline Planning Application with Appearance and Landscaping Reserved

Three-storey side extension to form three self-contained flats with ground floor parking

32 High Street, Westbury

August 2026

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of an outline planning application at 32 High Street, Westbury. The application seeks outline planning permission for a three-storey side extension to the existing building to form three self-contained flats, with parking and servicing accommodated within the site. The existing building is retained, with the ground floor continuing as a commercial unit and existing upper floor accommodation remaining within the host building.

For clarity, the application is not submitted as a full planning application. It seeks to establish the acceptability of the principle of development, the proposed residential use, the broad amount of development, the means of access, the general layout and the maximum three-storey scale shown on the submitted drawings. The matters of detailed external appearance and landscaping are reserved for later approval. The submitted elevations and site layout therefore provide the Council with a clear indication of the intended design approach and demonstrate that an acceptable form of development can be achieved, but the final external materials, detailed architectural treatment, fenestration detailing, boundary treatment and landscaping specification would be controlled through the subsequent reserved matters stage.

The current proposal follows an earlier planning approval at the site for a side extension and upper floor residential accommodation, with parking beneath. Although that earlier scheme was not implemented, the officer assessment remains a material consideration. It accepted the principle of extending the building, providing residential accommodation at upper floor level, retaining commercial activity at ground floor level and using the existing access from High Street for off-street parking. The present outline application builds upon that accepted principle, but presents a revised and more efficient form of development having regard to the latest submitted drawings and the National Planning Policy Framework 2026.

2. Application Type and Reserved Matters

The application is made in outline with some matters reserved. The approach is appropriate because the key planning principle is whether the site can accept additional residential development of the scale and broad layout proposed, having regard to its town centre location, the previous planning history, neighbour amenity, highway safety and the character of the area. The submitted plans provide sufficient information to allow those matters to be assessed, while leaving detailed design matters to be refined through a later reserved matters application.

The matters to be considered at outline stage are the principle of the development, the provision of three self-contained flats, the use of the existing High Street access, the broad parking and turning arrangement, the siting of the extension and the maximum three-storey scale. These matters are shown with sufficient clarity on the submitted ground floor, upper floor, roof, elevation and site drawings. The reserved matters would deal with the final external appearance of the extension and the detailed landscaping and boundary treatment within the site. This approach allows the Council to control the final quality of the development while still determining the main planning merits of the proposal at this stage.

Where the submitted elevations show window positions, balconies, openings and external treatment, those drawings should be read as an illustrative design framework for the outline application rather than as a fully detailed appearance submission. They demonstrate that the building can be designed in a coherent manner and that the amenity issues identified in the previous officer report can be addressed. A future reserved matters submission would provide the final appearance details, including materials, window proportions, reveals, balustrades, colours, finishes, refuse store enclosure, cycle store enclosure and any detailed landscaping specification.

3. The Site and Existing Context

The application site comprises 32 High Street, Westbury, and land to the side and rear of the existing building. The site lies within the built-up area of Westbury and forms part of the town centre environment. The surrounding area is mixed in character, with commercial uses at ground floor level, residential

accommodation on upper floors and residential properties beyond the immediate town centre frontage. This mixed-use context is relevant to the assessment of the principle of development and the acceptability of additional residential accommodation.

The existing building has a commercial ground floor and upper floor accommodation, with existing access and parking arrangements serving the site. The submitted existing plans identify the ground floor, first floor, basement and roof plan arrangements, together with the existing site layout and access from High Street. The proposal retains the existing vehicular access and uses land within the site for parking, turning, cycle storage and refuse storage.

The site is within walking distance of town centre shops, services, public car parking and local transport opportunities. This means that future occupiers would not be wholly dependent on the private car for day-to-day needs. The town centre location also means that modest residential intensification can contribute to natural surveillance, footfall and the continued use of town centre facilities outside normal daytime commercial hours.

4. Planning History and Material Considerations

The previous planning permission at the site is an important material consideration. The earlier officer report for PL/2023/05520 considered a side extension with parking below, together with residential accommodation at upper floor level and commercial use at ground floor level. The officer report identified the site as a building within Westbury town centre and within a designated town centre commercial area. It also recorded that the highway authority considered the principle of residential development and the change of use acceptable in transportation terms because of the town centre location and proximity to amenities and public transport.

The previous assessment accepted that the site lies within the settlement limits of Westbury and that Westbury is identified as a Market Town in the Wiltshire Core Strategy. It confirmed that within defined settlement limits there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, subject to the detailed planning considerations. It also accepted that upper floor residential use within the town centre was appropriate in principle, provided that environmental and highway considerations were satisfactorily addressed.

The current outline proposal differs from the earlier permission because it proposes a three-storey side extension and three self-contained flats rather than the previously approved two-storey form. Nevertheless, the broad planning principles remain closely related. The site is the same, the existing access is retained, residential accommodation remains focused at upper levels, commercial activity is retained at ground floor level and parking is provided within the site. The previous approval therefore carries positive weight in the assessment of the current outline application, while recognising that the increased scale and final detailed design must be considered on their own merits through outline and reserved matters stages.

5. Development Plan and National Policy Context

The application must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant development plan includes the Wiltshire Core Strategy and saved policies of the West Wiltshire District Local Plan where they remain in force. The previous officer report identified policies concerned with the settlement strategy, delivery strategy, economic regeneration, retail and leisure, sustainable construction, high quality design and place shaping, sustainable transport and transport impacts. Those policies remain relevant to the broad assessment of the present outline application.

Saved local plan policies relating to town centre shopping, secondary retail frontages, upper floor uses in town centres and flat conversions are also relevant. The proposal involves additional flatted accommodation within an established town centre site and must be considered having regard to access, parking, neighbour amenity, living conditions and the outward appearance of the building. The outline nature of the application does not reduce the need to consider those matters, but it does mean that the final external appearance and landscaping details can properly be dealt with at reserved matters stage.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2026 is a material consideration. The Framework separates plan-making policies from national decision-making policies. In decision-making terms, the proposal is particularly relevant to policies concerned with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, the principle of development within settlements, town centre vitality and viability, the effective use of land, appropriate densities, design quality, sustainable transport, climate change and living conditions.

The national policy direction is supportive of making effective and efficient use of land within settlements, particularly where proposals make better use of underutilised land and buildings, create additional homes within existing urban areas and support sustainable patterns of movement. The decision-making policy for town centres also gives substantial weight to the benefits of development which supports the vitality and viability of centres through diversification, intensification and residential accommodation. These policy changes strengthen the planning case for appropriate town centre residential intensification on previously developed land, provided that the detailed impacts are acceptable.

6. Description of the Proposed Development

The latest submitted drawings describe the development as a side extension to form three self-contained flats. The proposed ground floor plan shows parking, a turning area, the main entrance, cycle storage for three cycles and a refuse bin area. The first and second floor plans show the proposed one-bedroom residential accommodation arranged above the parking area, with lounge/kitchen areas, bedrooms, bathrooms and shared circulation.

The proposed extension is shown as a three-storey element attached to the side of the retained building. The elevations show the intended massing and design approach, including a regular arrangement of openings to the front elevation and balconies serving the upper floors. The rear elevation shows the relationship between the retained building and the proposed extension. The side elevation includes a note that first floor windows on the relevant side elevation are to be obscure glazed and fixed, responding to the amenity issue identified in the earlier officer report.

The submitted drawings are sufficient for an outline assessment of the principle, access, broad layout and scale of development. They also demonstrate that detailed reserved matters can come forward in a form which is compatible with the site and surrounding area. The final external appearance and landscaping would be submitted for approval at a later stage, and the Council would retain control over the detailed design quality of the development.

7. Principle of Development

The principle of development is acceptable. The site is located within the defined settlement limits of Westbury and within an established town centre location. The proposal makes more effective use of land associated with an existing commercial and residential building and would provide additional housing without extending the town beyond its existing built limits.

The previous officer report accepted the principle of residential accommodation at upper floor level within the town centre. It also found that residential use would not result in overdevelopment or an over-intensive use of the site, provided that access, parking, amenity and design were acceptable. That conclusion remains directly relevant to the current application because the proposal continues to provide upper floor residential accommodation within a mixed-use town centre site.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2026 gives substantial weight to the benefits of making better use of vacant and underutilised land and buildings, including the conversion or intensification of space above shops, the redevelopment of underutilised retail and business sites and additional development within existing plots. The proposal falls squarely within that policy objective. It provides new homes in a settlement, within a town centre, on land already associated with an existing building and access arrangement.

The use of an outline application with reserved matters is appropriate because the main planning principle can be determined now, while detailed external design and landscaping can be refined later. There is sufficient information before the Council to conclude that three flats, accessed and served in the manner shown, can be accommodated on the site without creating an unacceptable form of development.

8. Amount, Layout and Efficient Use of Land

The amount of development is appropriate for the town centre location. The proposal provides three one-bedroom flats within a three-storey side extension, with parking and servicing arranged within the existing site. The scheme is compact, but that is not inappropriate in this context. Town centre sites are expected to make efficient use of land, particularly where they are accessible and already contain a mix of uses.

The broad layout is practical and legible. Vehicular access is retained from High Street, with four parking spaces arranged within the main parking area, a turning area to allow vehicle manoeuvring and a further retained parking space to the rear. Cycle storage and refuse storage are also shown within the site. These elements demonstrate that the development can operate without relying on uncontrolled parking or storage arrangements outside the application site.

The residential layout is compact but appropriate for one-bedroom town centre flats. The lounge/kitchen and bedroom areas shown on the proposed floor plans indicate that the flats are capable of providing a reasonable standard of accommodation. Final internal specifications and Building Regulations matters would follow in the normal way, but there is no planning reason to conclude at outline stage that acceptable accommodation could not be achieved.

The use of the ground floor of the extension for parking is a beneficial design response because it allows residential accommodation to be provided above without displacing all parking from the site. It also reflects the approach previously accepted by the Council, where parking beneath a side extension was considered acceptable in principle.

9. Scale and Massing

The proposed extension is three storeys in height. This represents an increase over the earlier approved two-storey side extension, and the additional height must therefore be assessed in terms of townscape, neighbour amenity and the ability of the site to accommodate the development. The maximum three-storey scale is a matter for consideration at outline stage because it is integral to the amount of development proposed.

In the context of the High Street and the wider town centre, a three-storey form of development is capable of being acceptable. The site is not a low-density suburban edge-of-settlement site. It is a centrally located mixed-use site where built form is generally more varied and where national policy now gives stronger support to appropriate intensification within settlements and town centres.

The submitted elevations demonstrate that the extension can be read as a coherent addition to the existing building rather than as a detached or unrelated form. The front elevation uses an ordered arrangement of openings and projecting balcony features, while the ground floor remains open for parking. The final detailed appearance is reserved, but the submitted drawings show that the scale can be accommodated within an acceptable architectural framework.

The relationship with neighbouring properties will need to be controlled through the detailed reserved matters submission. In particular, the final window positions, privacy treatments, balcony detailing and side elevation treatment should be designed so that the additional storey does not result in unacceptable overlooking, loss of privacy or overbearing impact. These are detailed matters capable of being addressed within the outline parameters.

10. Appearance and Design Quality

Appearance is reserved and will be dealt with through a later reserved matters application. The submitted elevations should therefore be read as indicative of the intended architectural approach and as evidence that a satisfactory design solution can be achieved. They are not intended to remove the Council's ability to consider the final external materials, finishes, fenestration proportions, balcony detailing and architectural treatment at reserved matters stage.

The design of the final scheme should respond positively to the host building and the surrounding town centre context. The previous officer report found that the earlier side extension was acceptable in design terms because it related to the broad design of the host building and would not harm the character of the area or street scene. The current proposal should follow the same design principle, while recognising

that the three-storey scale requires careful attention to proportions, vertical emphasis, materials and the relationship with the retained building.

A reserved matters application should secure a high quality external treatment which avoids a crude or overly bulky appearance. Materials should be chosen to complement the existing building and the mixed commercial and residential character of the High Street. Window proportions should be balanced, balcony details should be visually lightweight, and the ground floor parking area should be designed so that it appears safe, well managed and integrated into the building rather than as an exposed leftover space.

Subject to those detailed matters, the outline proposal is capable of achieving an acceptable standard of design. The application therefore provides a sound basis for the Council to grant outline permission while retaining control over the final appearance of the extension.

11. Landscaping and External Areas

Landscaping is reserved and would be addressed through a later reserved matters application. The submitted site plan identifies the general arrangement of the parking, turning, cycle storage and refuse storage areas, but the detailed treatment of hard and soft landscaping, planting, enclosure and surface materials can properly be secured later.

The town centre context means that extensive landscaping would not be expected. Nevertheless, the detailed scheme should include proportionate soft landscaping and planting where practical, together with suitable hard surface materials for the parking and turning areas. The final landscaping details should also consider the appearance of the refuse and cycle storage areas, boundary treatments, pedestrian routes and the relationship between the commercial unit, residential entrance and parking area.

A landscaping reserved matters submission would allow the Council to ensure that the external areas are functional, durable and visually acceptable. It would also allow climate resilience measures to be incorporated where practicable, such as permeable or semi-permeable surfacing, suitable planting and well-considered drainage falls.

12. Residential Amenity for Future Occupiers

The proposal would provide three self-contained one-bedroom flats in a central and accessible location. The submitted plans show each flat with a separate bedroom, lounge/kitchen area and bathroom facilities. The one-bedroom format is suitable for a town centre location and is likely to appeal to occupiers who value proximity to services, public transport and local facilities.

The town centre setting means that future residents would benefit from immediate access to shops and services. Private external amenity space would be limited, but this is not unusual for town centre flatted development. The absence of conventional private gardens is not, in itself, a reason to resist the development where the overall living conditions are acceptable and the location is appropriate for smaller flats.

The detailed reserved matters submission should ensure that habitable rooms receive adequate daylight and outlook, that privacy between flats is appropriately managed and that the residential entrance, stairwell, refuse storage and cycle storage are safe and convenient to use. These are matters which can be satisfactorily controlled through the detailed design stage.

13. Neighbour Amenity

The relationship with neighbouring residential properties was carefully considered in the previous officer report. The earlier assessment identified the residential property at 11 Haynes Road as the nearest sensitive neighbouring property and considered the potential for overlooking towards rear garden areas. The previous permission addressed that issue through a condition requiring certain windows to be obscure glazed and fixed shut.

The current proposal is larger than the earlier approval, but the submitted drawings respond to the same amenity issue by noting that first floor windows on the relevant side elevation are to be obscure glazed

and fixed. That demonstrates that the applicant has recognised the principal privacy concern and that the scheme can be controlled to avoid unacceptable overlooking. At reserved matters stage, the Council would be able to review the final position, size and treatment of windows and balconies to ensure that neighbouring privacy is properly protected.

In terms of outlook and overbearing impact, the site is within a town centre context where built form is closer and more intensive than in a wholly residential suburban setting. The proposed extension would sit beside the existing building and would not introduce residential activity into an isolated or undeveloped rear garden environment. The detailed design should nevertheless ensure that the side and rear elevations are handled carefully, and that any sensitive openings are appropriately controlled.

Subject to reserved matters and appropriate conditions, the proposal is capable of being implemented without unacceptable harm to the living conditions of neighbouring residents. The outline stage provides enough information to confirm that the broad relationship is acceptable, while the final design details remain capable of control.

14. Access, Parking and Sustainable Transport

The proposal retains the existing vehicular access from High Street. The submitted plans show four parking spaces within the main parking area, a turning area and a retained parking space to the rear. The previous highway consultation response raised no objection to the use of the existing access and accepted that the town centre location was suitable in principle for residential development.

The level of parking is appropriate for three one-bedroom flats and the existing mixed-use context. The provision of on-site parking reduces reliance on surrounding streets and demonstrates that the proposal can be served within the limits of the site. The turning area shown on the plan provides a basis for vehicles to manoeuvre within the site, although final swept path and parking management details could be secured by condition if required by the highway authority.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2026 promotes locating development where it can support sustainable patterns of movement, limit the need to travel by private car and offer a genuine choice of transport modes. It also expects transport considerations to be integral to design, with priority given to walking, wheeling and cycling. The proposal is consistent with that approach. The site is within the town centre, the flats are small one-bedroom units, cycle storage is included and local services are available nearby. The proposal therefore strikes an appropriate balance between providing practical parking and encouraging sustainable travel.

15. Cycle Storage and Refuse Storage

The submitted plans show cycle storage for three cycles. This is appropriate for the three one-bedroom flats now proposed. The provision of secure and covered cycle parking supports the sustainable transport credentials of the scheme and responds to the highway matters raised in the previous officer report, where cycle storage was identified as a necessary element of the residential accommodation.

A refuse bin area is also shown within the site. This allows bins to be stored away from the public highway and managed as part of the residential accommodation. The final design of the bin store should be secured by condition or reserved matters to ensure that it is convenient for residents, visually acceptable and capable of being serviced without causing obstruction or harm to highway safety.

16. Climate Change, Drainage and Sustainability

The National Planning Policy Framework 2026 gives continued emphasis to climate change mitigation and adaptation. The proposal supports that objective by making use of an existing town centre site and providing homes in a location where residents can walk, cycle or use public transport for many daily journeys. By locating additional housing close to existing services, the development helps limit the need to travel by private car.

The proposal also retains and adapts the existing built context rather than requiring a new development site at the edge of the settlement. Detailed design and Building Regulations matters will address fabric efficiency, insulation, ventilation, overheating, water efficiency and low-carbon services. Opportunities

should be taken at detailed stage to incorporate energy efficient construction, high-performance glazing, efficient heating and lighting, and appropriate ventilation.

Drainage details should be addressed through an appropriate surface water strategy, proportionate to the scale of the proposal, with consideration given to sustainable drainage measures where practicable within the constraints of the site. The reserved matters and technical condition stages would provide further opportunity to refine external surface treatment, drainage details and minor environmental enhancements.

17. Public Protection and Compatibility of Uses

The existing and proposed relationship between commercial and residential uses is typical of a town centre setting. The previous officer report accepted the mixed-use arrangement subject to appropriate controls relating to public protection matters. For the current proposal, the ground floor commercial use is retained and the new flats would be positioned above parking and alongside the existing building. The key issue is ensuring compatibility between the commercial use, vehicle movements, parking activity and the proposed residential accommodation.

The outline proposal is capable of addressing those matters through detailed design. The residential entrance should be secure and separated from operational commercial areas. Bin and cycle stores should be managed so that they do not interfere with vehicle movement. Any plant, ventilation, extraction or external equipment associated with the commercial unit should be positioned and controlled to avoid unacceptable noise, odour or disturbance to future occupiers and neighbours. Such details can be addressed through conditions or reserved matters where necessary.

18. Planning Balance

The proposal delivers clear planning benefits. It provides three additional homes in a sustainable town centre location, makes effective use of an underutilised part of an existing site, retains commercial activity at ground floor level, provides on-site parking and cycle storage, and contributes to the residential population of Westbury town centre. These benefits attract positive weight under the development plan and substantial weight under the National Planning Policy Framework 2026 policies supporting town centre residential accommodation and the effective use of land.

The main matters requiring careful control are scale, appearance, neighbour amenity, access, parking, refuse storage, cycle storage and compatibility between uses. The outline application provides enough information to assess the principle, amount, access, broad layout and maximum scale. The reserved matters mechanism ensures that the final appearance and landscaping can be considered in detail before the development is implemented.

The three-storey scale is greater than the earlier permission, but national policy now gives stronger support to appropriate intensification within settlements and town centres. The proposal is not an isolated or out-of-character residential scheme. It is an urban extension to an existing mixed-use building within the heart of Westbury. Subject to appropriate conditions and reserved matters, the development would not result in unacceptable harm to the character of the area, neighbour amenity or highway safety.

19. Conclusion

The application site is within the settlement limits of Westbury and within an established town centre location. The previous officer report accepted the principle of extending the building, providing additional residential accommodation at upper floor level and using the existing access and on-site parking arrangement. That planning history remains a material consideration and provides a clear foundation for the current outline proposal.

The latest submitted plans show a three-storey side extension to form three self-contained flats, with four parking spaces within the main parking area, a further retained parking space to the rear, a turning area, cycle storage for three cycles and a refuse bin area. The proposal provides a compact and efficient form of residential development which is well suited to the town centre setting.

The application has deliberately been framed as outline planning permission with some matters reserved. It seeks approval for the principle of the development, the broad amount of residential accommodation, the use of the existing access, the general site arrangement and the maximum three-storey scale, while reserving detailed external appearance and landscaping for subsequent approval. This is a proportionate and appropriate approach for the site, because it allows the Council to determine the planning merits of the development while retaining proper control over the final detailed design.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2026 strengthens the support for the scheme by giving substantial weight to the benefits of making better use of underutilised land and buildings, creating additional homes within settlements and supporting the vitality and viability of town centres through residential intensification. The proposal is consistent with those objectives and remains capable of satisfying the detailed requirements of the development plan in relation to design, amenity, access, parking and servicing.

For these reasons, and subject to appropriate reserved matters and planning conditions, the proposal represents a sustainable and acceptable form of development. Outline planning permission should therefore be granted.

