

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

FOR

**RETROSPECTIVE WORKS AND CHANGE OF USE
12 HIGH STREET,
MELKSHAM,
WILTSHIRE,
SN12 6JU**

FOR

CLIENT

Mr Chris Stevens

PREPARED BY



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1.00 INTRODUCTION

1.01 This combined Design, Access and Planning Statement accompanies an application for: -

- Full Planning Permission for the change of use of the first and second floors from HMO (Sui Generis) to two self-contained residential flats (Use Class C3); and
- Listed Building Consent for retrospective internal works already undertaken, together with consent for equivalent internal works required to complete the conversion.

The building is Grade II listed and lies within the Melksham Conservation Area. The ground floor commercial barbershop (Use Class E) remains unchanged.

This statement draws upon the submitted drawings (26-1134 series) and the Heritage Assessment prepared by Forum Heritage Services.

2.00 SITE AND CONTEXT

2.01 Forum Heritage Services confirms that although the building is listed as early 19th century, historic mapping and photographic evidence demonstrate that No. 12 is in fact a late-19th-century building (c.1870–1880). Its significance lies primarily in the external façade, including the ashlar front elevation, sash windows with horns, and group value with Nos. 14 and 16, along with its contribution to the Melksham Conservation Area, where the building's scale, proportions and materials reinforce the historic character of the High Street.

Internally: -

- The ground floor has no surviving historic fabric due to modern commercial alterations.
- The first and second floors retain limited historic interest, with modest lath-and-plaster partitions, simple chimney pieces, and a mid-to-late-19th-century staircase.
- The internal plan form has likely been altered historically, particularly when the ground floor became a shop in the early 20th century.

The site is in a highly sustainable town-centre location with established commercial and residential uses.

3.00 PLANNING BACKGROUND & ENFORCEMENT CONTEXT

3.01 Internal works were undertaken in April 2026 in connection with a proposed conversion to two flats. Wiltshire Council subsequently requested a formal application to regularise the works.

This submission: -

- Provides full plans of works undertaken
- Includes a professional heritage assessment
- Demonstrates that the works cause minimal heritage harm
- Provides a compliant and complete change-of-use proposal

4.00 DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

4.01 Change of Use

The proposal seeks to convert the first and second floors from HMO (Sui Generis) to Two C3 residential flats, resulting in: -

- Reduced occupancy intensity
- Improved living standards
- A return to the building's historic domestic character
- No impact on the commercial ground floor
- No external alterations or increase in footprint

4.02 Retrospective Internal Works

The following internal works were undertaken without prior consent and now require retrospective Listed Building Consent:

- Removal of a lath-and-plaster partition between front rooms at first-floor level
- Alteration of a fireplace opening in the first-floor rear room
- Insertion of stud partitions at first-floor level and to the kitchen and bathroom area at second floor level
- Modification of the lower section of the staircase between first and second floors
- Insertion of a partition within the small rear extension

4.03 Proposed Internal Works

To complete the conversion approval is sought for: -

- Equivalent stud partitions at second-floor level with lath and plaster finishes
- Minor internal adjustments to complete the two-flat layout
- Repair and refurbishment of existing timber sash windows

All works are internal and reversible.

5.00 HERITAGE IMPACT SUMMARY

5.01 Significance

Forum Heritage Services concludes: -

- No. 12 is late 19th century, not early 19th century.
- Its external appearance is the key contributor to significance.
- The interior has low to medium significance, with the staircase and surviving sash windows being the most notable elements.
- Internal plan form has likely been altered historically, particularly following early-20th-century commercial conversion.
- The building's designation is justified primarily by its external architectural character and contribution to the conservation area.

5.02 Impact of Works

The heritage assessment confirms: -

- Minimal harm has been caused by the works undertaken.

- The removed first-floor partition was not original and likely formed part of early-20th-century reorganisation.
- The staircase modification retains the historic newel post and balusters, and the new arrangement provides improved fire safety, balancing the minimal heritage impact.
- The enlarged fireplace opening is consistent with the functional requirements/regulations of a modern kitchen.
- No external fabric is affected.
- No works have impacted a key element of the building's significance, in accordance with NPPF 2026 Policy HE5(2)(c).

5.03 **Conclusion**

The works have not seriously affected any key element of the asset's significance, and the building's contribution to the conservation area remains fully intact.

6.00 **DESIGN PRINCIPLES, LAYOUT, SCALE, APPEARANCE AND MATERIALS**

6.01 **Design Principles**

The design approach is guided by: -

- Minimal intervention - all works are internal and reversible.
- Respect for historic character - retaining staircase, windows, and surviving fabric.
- Functional improvement - creating safe, legible, modern residential layouts.
- Conservation-led enhancement.

6.02 **Layout**

- Historic circulation via the staircase is retained.
- Larger front rooms serve as living spaces and bedrooms.
- Smaller rear rooms accommodate kitchens and bathrooms.
- New partitions are lightweight and reversible.
- Layout improves fire safety and amenity.

6.03 **Scale and Appearance**

External: -

- No external alterations.
- Existing windows retained and refurbished.
- No change to massing, height, or façade.

Internal: -

- Historic features retained where present.
- Modern partitions are visually unobtrusive.

6.04 **Materials**

Retained: -

- Lath and plaster
- Timber sash windows
- Timber staircase

New: -

- Timber stud partitions
- Plasterboard and skim
- Conservation-appropriate repair materials
- Lath and plaster

All new materials are reversible and compatible with historic fabric.

7.00 PLANNING STATEMENT

7.01 Policy Context

The proposal aligns with: -

- NPPF - heritage, sustainable development, town-centre vitality
- Wiltshire Core Strategy - heritage conservation, housing, town-centre uses
- Melksham Neighbourhood Plan - supporting residential uses in sustainable locations

7.02 Principle of Development

The conversion of upper floors to residential use is: -

- Appropriate in town-centre locations
- Consistent with historic domestic origins
- Supportive of town-centre vitality
- Compatible with the conservation area

7.03 Heritage Policy Compliance

The proposal: -

- Preserves the building's external appearance
- Causes minimal internal heritage impact
- Retains historic features
- Aligns with NPPF heritage guidance

7.04 Residential Amenity

The two flats provide: -

- Good internal space standards
- Logical layouts
- Adequate natural light
- Safe circulation
- No overlooking or amenity conflicts

7.05 Highways and Access

No changes to: -

- External access
- Parking
- Highways

- Rights of way

The site is highly sustainable.

7.06 Drainage and Flood Risk

No changes to drainage and the site is not in a flood zone.

7.07 Biodiversity

BNG exemptions applies because: -

- All works are internal
- No land take
- No habitat impact

8.00 ACCESS

8.01 Access remains via the existing entrance and staircase. Internal circulation is improved and safer.

9.00 WASTE AND SERVICING

9.01 Waste storage continues in the existing rear yard. No external structures or changes required.

10.00 FLOOD RISK & DRAINAGE

10.01 The site is not within a flood zone. Surface water continues to drain to the existing mains system.

11.00 BIODIVERSITY

11.01 The proposal is entirely internal. No external works, no land take, and no habitat impact. BNG exemption applies.

12.00 CONCLUSION

12.01 This proposal represents a sensitive, proportionate, and justified conversion of the upper floors of a Grade II listed building. The works preserve the building's external architectural significance, cause minimal internal heritage impact, improve safety and functionality, deliver high-quality residential accommodation, support the vitality of Melksham town centre, fully address enforcement requirements and comply with national and local planning policy. Thus, approval is respectfully sought.