Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

25th October 2022

Officer's Name: Jonathan Maidman
Officer's Title: Planning Officer

Helen Garside
Principal Conservation Officer
Wiltshire Council Conservation (Central)

Application No: **PL/2023/05160 (FUL)**
Erection of galvanised steel canopy (Retrospective).
1A Wicker Hill, Trowbridge

Please find following comments in respect of the above application(s).

Recommendations:

X	Comment
	Support
	Support subject to conditions (please set out below)
	Object (for reasons set out below)
	No objections

Scope of comments: the following comments relate to the built historic environment.

Policy: From the point of view of the historic environment the main statutory tests are set out within the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 66 (PP) requires that **special regard** be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 also requires the Council to pay **special attention** to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of designated Conservation Areas.

The NPPF outlines government policy, including its policy in respect of the historic environment. Section 12 'Achieving well-designed places' seeks to achieve good design and Section 16 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' set out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development. In an historic context, Paragraph 197 requires local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

National Planning Practice Guidance provides guidance on interpreting the NPPF.

The Council's Core Strategy 'Core Policy 58: Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment' requires that designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved and where possible enhanced. The Council's Core Strategy CP 57: Ensuring high quality design requires a high quality of design in all new developments. Proposals are required to "demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through [amongst other issues] enhancing local distinctiveness by responding to

the value of the natural and historic environment and responding positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting.

Site: The application relates to a supermarket within a modern building which overlooks an otherwise attractive public open space at the foot of Wicker Hill next to the River Biss. The site is within the conservation area and the shop lies within the immediate surroundings of the grade II listed town bridge and lock-up. The junction at the foot if Wicker Hill marks the entrance to an exceptional run of historic buildings and townscape on Fore Street which evidence the high social status of the area in the past.

Proposal: the application is revised proposal following the refusal of a previous application seeking retrospective consent for a galvanised canopy, enclosed by metal shutters which has been erected at the supermarket. The revised proposal commits to the addition of artwork to decorate the glavanised panels when the shutters are closed.

Issues: impact on the listed building, impact on the settings of the adjacent listed buildings, impact on the conservation area.

Assessment: Paragraph 194 requires that applicants describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. This should include sufficient information to provide a clear understanding of the significance of the heritage asset and its setting and the potential impact of any proposals on that significance. In this case, the applications are accompanied by a “Design and Access Statement” which includes sufficient information to cover the required issues and meets the requirements of para 194.

It remains my view that the constructed canopy appears as tacked-on structure of temporary and low-quality construction and inappropriate materials in the conservation area. However, it is accepted that the intimidating out of hours appearance of the shutters when closed will be mitigated to an extent by the proposed artwork. Previous photos have been submitted and it is also accepted that the shopfront prior to the addition of the canopy was of a standard modern type, dominated by internal ‘brand-wall’ montages and that the display of goods outside the shop has added some interest.

I also note that a business case has been made for the retention of the created space and will be assessed by the Case Officer.

Summary & conclusion: It remains my opinion that the structure constitutes poor design within the conservation area and to the detriment of the settings of nearby listed buildings and I am unconvinced that it meets the expectations of the NPPF for high quality design which enhances the historic environment. There are no conservation benefits stemming from the proposals.

However, I accept that the proposed artwork will mitigate some of the impact of the structure during closed hours and it will fall to the Case Officer to determine whether this, in combination with the business case and any public support expressed, is sufficient in terms of overall public benefits to outweigh the small level of residual harm which results from the proposals.