PL/2023/07934
21-23 Fore Street Trowbridge

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

Site: the building occupies prominent corner location within the town centre. It was constructed for Henry John Knee (of the local department stores) in 1887 as Knees Emporium. The building is constructed in local ashlar in a restrained classical design which reflects other high-status buildings of the period in the town. The ground floor shop fronts are much altered and the roof and parapet are also altered but, the upper floors are otherwise largely unchanged and building overall continues to make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the area. For these reasons it should be considered a non-designated heritage asset. It is located within the designated conservation area.

Policy: 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. Paragraph 203 of the NPPF relates to non-designated assets and requires a balanced approach with any harm which would be caused being weighed against the potential public benefits which might be achieved.

The Council's Core Strategy Policy CP58 'Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment' requires that "designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance." It is also required that distinctive elements of Wiltshire's historic environment, including non-designated heritage assets, which contribute to a sense of local character and identity will be conserved, and where possible enhanced.

Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy Policy CP57 'Ensuring high quality design and place shaping': A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality.

Proposal: the application is for the proposed replacement of the doors and windows.

Issues: impact on this non-designate heritage asset, impact on the character or sustainability of the conservation area.

Assessment: The windows date from the late C19 and would have been unlikely to ever feature small Georgian panes. The remaining single pane timber casements in the upper floors are likely to be original to the building, or at least to be in the original style. Whilst there is no objection in principle to the replacement of the windows and or to the product details in general, the specific pattern of fenestration selected for the replacements should reflect the historic character of the building. Photos of c.1920s show it as follows:



Summary: the submitted drawings fail to reflect the historic character of the building and I would suggest that the pattern of fenestration be reconsidered and based on historic evidence.