Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Application No: **PL/2023/09712**
Class MA: Conversion of existing two storey commercial building into 2 no.1 bedroom flats
28a Gloucester Road, Trowbridge, BA14 0AA

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

Recommendations:

X	Comments (for reasons set out below)
	Support in principle subject to amendments to the scheme (as set out below)
	Support subject to conditions (as 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 test is set out within the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 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 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development. Paragraphs 201-3 of the NPPF require a balanced approach with any harm which would be caused being weighed against the potential public benefits which might be achieved. 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.

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.

Site and assets considered: The property is a non listed building located within Trowbridge (Newtown) Conservation Area

Proposal: The proposal seeks the conversion of existing two storey commercial building into 2 no.1 bedroom flats

Relevant planning history: PL/2023/09712 – Class MA: Conversion

Issues: Impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Information considered/provided: This unlisted building lies in a urban block of other similar Victorian terraced and semi-detached buildings which are located within Trowbridge (Newtown) Conservation Area. The semi-detached pair of properties form a corner plot and are therefore prominent in the street scene.

In conservation terms it is regrettable at the blocking up of the door opening at ground floor on West Street. This is an original entrance and has an arched top opening. It is also regrettable that better window designs have not been specified in order to reflect the original Victorian sash windows that the property would have had.

There is no objection to a new screen wall to the frontage of Gloucester Road, subject to this being built of traditional red bricks, lime mortar and English Garden Wall Bond with a half round brick coping. The height of this wall should mirror that on the opposite corner of West Street. The proposed wall is not however shown on the proposed Block Plan for the development.

Summary & conclusion: The NPPF confirms that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). It makes clear that any harm to a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification.

As the NPPF states, heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and it is important to conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. Further information and/or amendments are therefore required.