

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

1 December 2025

Fiona Webb
Senior Conservation Officer (Consultant)
Wiltshire Council Conservation (Central)

Officer's Name: Joe Leesam
Officer's Title: Planning Officer

Application No: PL/2025/09209
Off Street Parking
9 UNION STREET, RAMSBURY, MARLBOROUGH, SN8 2PR

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

Recommendations:

☐	No comment
☐	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 tests are 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 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 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development. Paragraphs 214-216 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 210 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 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."

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.

Historic England Advice Note 2 – Making changes to Heritage Assets illustrates the application of policies set out in the NPPF in determining applications for PP and LBC.

Site and assets considered: The site is an unlisted building located in Ramsbury Conservation Area and is a mid-terraced property.

Proposal: The proposal seeks the creation of a off street parking space.

Relevant planning history: K/59453/F - Creation of parking bay and retaining walls to each side of bay (refuse) (appeal dismissed); K/50789/F - Removal of unstable wall and three trees. Construction of a vehicular access and parking area including changes to levels (refuse).

Issues: impact on the conservation area.

Information considered/provided: Paragraph 207 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 application is not accompanied by any “Heritage Statement” and therefore fails to provide any objective assessment of the impact of the proposal and, as a result, it fails to meet the requirements of the NPPF.

However, paragraph 208 also provides for the local planning authority to make its own assessment of impact and the following heritage recommendations are offered on this basis.

Significance of assets and contribution of setting: The NPPF defines significance as the “value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be **archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic**. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.” Historic England assesses significance in a similar manner, referring to evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values of a place.

In this case the significance of the site lies largely with its distinctive relationship between buildings and landform. To the west the buildings are mostly level with the road, whereas on the eastern side there is a substantial bank and the buildings sit much higher. Views up and down the street are also contained. This relationship has a significant aesthetic and contributes to the character of the conservation area.

Assessment: Union Street is a narrow country lane within the Ramsbury Conservation Area. The site is located to the rear of a short row of cottages, which currently have no vehicular access. On the western side of the lane, the buildings are more or less level with the street, whereas on the eastern side there is a steep bank, resulting in the buildings sitting much higher than street level.

This distinctive relationship between buildings and landform is recognised in the adopted Conservation Area Appraisal which states ‘To the west the buildings are mostly level with the road, whereas on the eastern side there is a substantial bank and the buildings sit much higher. Views up and down the street are contained.’

It is noted that past comments have resisted new driveways being cut into this wall and bank, as this would have a significant impact on the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area. The engineering works required for the provision of one parking space is deemed as excessive. The gap required, associated site splays and retaining walls would harm the sense of enclosure and street scene through cutting into the earth form and would have an over engineered appearance. In light of this, and past resistance to the creation of new openings along this lane, I am unable to offer my support for the current proposal since this would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

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.

The proposals will result in harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area via the loss of sense of enclosure in the street scene through cutting into the earth form and having an over engineered appearance. The proposals involve only part of the conservation area and could therefore be considered as causing 'less than substantial harm' for the purposes of interpreting the NPPF. However, the wording of the NPPF and the 'special attention' by Section 72 of the Act requires that any level harm caused should be taken seriously.

Whilst paragraph 215 allows that a level of harm may be offset by public benefits, which could include conservation benefits, in this case no objective justification has been provided for the works and the proposals are articulated as being primarily for the convenience of the occupants i.e. a private benefit. As a result, the proposals fail to meet with the requirements of current conservation legislation, policy or guidance and I therefore recommend refusal.