

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

INCLUDING HERITAGE ASSESSMENT



2 MARKET PLACE, CHIPPENHAM, WILTSHIRE SN15 3HD

**TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 RAW Planning Ltd are instructed by MP2 Developments Ltd (the “Applicant”) to submit a planning application for an external alterations and associated works at 2 Market Place, Chippenham SN15 3HD (the “Application Site”).
- 1.2 The building is unlisted, and positioned within the Chippenham town centre Conservation Area. It was historically occupied by HSBC bank until their lease expired in August 2023 and they vacated the premises. Many high street banks are not renewing leases where the branches are no longer commercially viable due to declining footfall.
- 1.3 On 26th November 2025, Class MA consent (PL/2025/06982) was granted for the change of use of the second and third floors into residential use comprising 4no. residential units. The ground floor remains in extant Class E use, and the first floor is currently undergoing some internal alterations.
- 1.4 The intention of this application is to undertake some external alterations to allow for improved thermal efficiencies, improve the external façade of the building where it fronts onto the Market Place, facilitate a rear external courtyard, reinstate the rear of the existing building and repurpose the vault which was a bespoke design for the buildings historic use as a bank.

2. APPLICATION SITE

- 2.1 The application site is situated within Chippenham town centre. The building itself has a prominent dual frontage onto the Market Place, near the junction of the High Street and River Street.

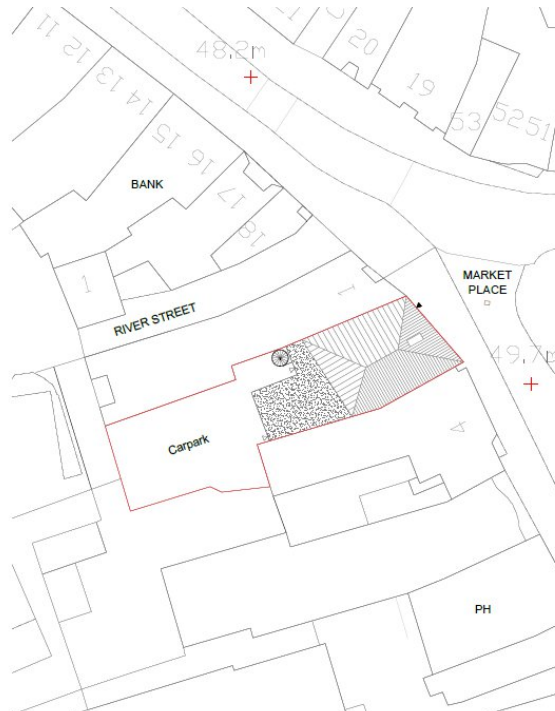


Image 1: Application site location



Image 2: Main elevation to application building fronting on to Market Place (newly refurbished 1 Market Place to the right of the application building)

- 2.2 The site is located in close proximity to a number of listed buildings and also within the Chippenham Conservation Area. The site also falls within the Primary Retail Frontage of the town.
- 2.3 At the ground floor, the footprint of the building was previous the old HSBC bank/'Class E' floorspace including what was the staff room with a kitchenette. At the very rear of the ground floor was the bank counter area, behind which was a corridor leading to the old safe which is now redundant and takes up a significant floor area. Off the main floorplate is a corridor with plant room and staircase up to the first floor.
- 2.4 The first floor is currently undergoing some internal works. The first, second and third floors within the building were occupied by offices, WCs and general storage areas to support the banking business. However, the second and third floors now have Class MA consent to convert them into a total of 4no. residential units with 2no. apartments per floor.
- 2.5 The rear elevation is largely rendered and painted white. The existing windows have metal bars on them which was due to security to protect the bank. At the ground floor is a rear brick projection which hosts the old safe.



Images 3&4: Rear of 2 Market Place

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The proposals involve a series of external alterations to improve the function, appearance and long-term maintenance of the building at 2 Market Place, while respecting its role within the Conservation Area. The works fall into three main areas: (1) alterations to the front elevation, (2) replacement of windows and security features at the rear, and (3) internal and external changes associated with the former safe area. The description below reflects the full scope of works and should be read alongside the supporting plans.

Front Elevation (Market Place)

- 3.2 The upper two storeys of the building are constructed in ashlar stone. These floors retain their existing detailing. The only change in this section is the replacement of the current white painted timber windows with new white timber sliding sash double-glazed windows. These are of the same style and material as the existing windows and represent a like-for-like upgrade to improve thermal performance. As these works constitute non-material replacement of existing windows on upper floors, they do not require planning permission.
- 3.3 The lower section of the front elevation is formed of a later stone façade that has been subject to alteration over time. Historic interventions include the installation of a night safe and former ATM under the occupies previous trading name of Midland Bank, with the ATM removed by HSBC and infilled with matching stone. As part of improving the usability of the ground-floor space, it is proposed to remove the existing night safe and reinstate the lower cill line (refer to point 7.8) to extend the shopfront glazing. This will increase natural light to the internal areas with minimal change to the elevation.
- 3.4 The existing windows to the ground floor will be replaced on a like-for-like basis in white painted timber, and a new transom detail will be introduced to retain the proportions and character of the current fenestration while achieving a unified design across the frontage.

Rear Elevation

- 3.5 The rear elevation is presently finished in painted roughcast render with windows fitted with metal security bars from the former bank use. These bars are unattractive and no longer required, so are proposed to be removed. The Wiltshire Council conservation officer has indicated that they would support the loss of these bars. All rear sliding sash windows will be replaced with new white sliding sash uPVC units, offering improved thermal performance while remaining visually appropriate in this secondary elevation which is not prominent in wider public views.

Alterations to Former Safe Area and Creation of Courtyard

- 3.6 At the rear of the ground floor is a single-storey projection which is a later addition to the original building, that historically accommodated the bank's secure safe. Internally, the structure contains reinforced concrete walls and ceiling that were installed for security rather than structural support. It is proposed that the concrete roof be removed and replaced with a thermally upgraded timber joist arrangement with EDPM (a type of synthetic rubber) roof covering. The section of the concrete roof which bridges between the vault and the original building will not be replaced to allow the creation of a small external courtyard. The redundant reinforced concrete wall and safe door will be removed and a new wall will be constructed to enclose the remaining structure, with new window openings added enabling the former safe room to be repurposed as a self-contained unit. The rear of the existing building will be infilled and rendered to match existing, with the incorporation of window openings to let natural light in to the space from this elevation, similar to that of the other floors.
- 3.7 This courtyard will facilitate natural light in the rear elevation on the ground floor improving functionality of the space, provide improved access and circulation to the rear yard and will support the building's transition from its former specialist use to a modern, more flexible town-centre layout.

4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that all planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is considered to be a material consideration that attracts significant weight.
- 4.2 The statutory requirement set out within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, at Sections 66(1) and 72(1) confirms that considerable weight should be given to the protection of the character and appearance of a Conservation Area.
- 4.3 This section refers to relevant national planning policy and guidance as well as Development Plan policies that provide the planning policy framework for this appeal that should be considered. It deals with the following layers of policy and guidance:
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
 - The Development Plan

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.4 The NPPF outlines national guidance and the Government's policies on the many different aspects of planning. The latest version of the NPPF was published in December 2024.
- 4.5 Paragraph 2 explains that planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.6 Paragraph 11 sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and states that for decision making this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay (sub-section(c)).

Making effective use of land

- 4.7 Paragraph 120 (d) states that planning policies and decisions should "*promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if it would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively.*"
- 4.8 Section 12 is entitled "Achieving well-designed places". Paragraph 126 explains that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Paragraph 130 sets out that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments will add to the overall quality of their area; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment.

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- 4.9 Section 16 is entitled "Conserving and enhancing the historic environment". Paragraph 199 states 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).
- 4.10 Paragraph 202 states that where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimal viable use. Paragraph 206 states that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas to enhance and better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

The Development Plan

- 4.11 The Statutory Development Plan covering the application site comprises the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and the saved policies of the North Wiltshire Local Plan (2011). The most relevant policies in the consideration of this application are as follows:
- 4.12 Core Policy 57 Ensuring high quality design and place shaping sets out 14 criteria which all new developments must meet, including alterations to existing buildings. Specifically, criterion (iv) requires development to be sympathetic to, and conserve historic buildings, and criterion (xii) requires the use of high standards of building materials and finishes.
- 4.13 Core Policy 58 Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment states that development should protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment. Designated heritage assets should be appropriately enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance.

5. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 This section assesses the proposed development against the adopted Development Plan and other material considerations, with particular regard to Wiltshire Core Policies 57 and 58, and the heritage and design requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 5.2 Core Policy 57 requires development to demonstrate high-quality design that responds positively to the existing character of the area, respects the local context, and uses appropriate materials. The NPPF (Paras. 126–130) reinforces this, highlighting that design should be sympathetic to local character and history, while allowing for the continued evolution of places.
- 5.3 The proposed alterations to 2 Market Place have been designed to respect the established appearance and form of the building:
- Upper floors retain their existing form, with only a like-for-like replacement of the white timber sash windows, using the same proportions and materials. This approach maintains the visual rhythm of the elevation and the established streetscene.
 - Lower shopfront area is updated through the lowering of the stone cill to reinstate the extend glazing. Whilst it is acknowledged that building facade does not facilitate an active frontage which is representative of majority of the other buildings in Market Place, this alteration attempts to reflect the commercial character of Market Place.
 - The introduction of a new transom reinstates a coherent fenestration pattern across the frontage, consistent with the architecture of the building.
 - At the rear elevation, replacement of security bars with modern uPVC windows which maintain their sliding sash appearance and functionality represents an improvement that has no adverse visual effect on the Conservation Area, given its limited prominence.
 - The modifications to the former safe area and the creation of a small courtyard improve access, daylighting and circulation within the building without altering the legibility of the rear elevation.
- 5.4 Collectively, these works meet the requirements of Core Policy 57 by ensuring the use of appropriate materials and detailing, retaining the hierarchy of the façade, and supporting the building's continued viability in a town centre location.

7. HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 This Heritage Statement supports an application for external alterations to 2 Market Place, Chippenham, a non-listed but historic commercial building located within the Chippenham Conservation Area. In accordance with Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Council must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. This statement assesses the heritage context, the significance of the building, and the degree to which the proposed works accord with the NPPF and Wiltshire Core Strategy.

History and Development of the Chippenham Conservation Area

- 7.2 Chippenham has developed around the Market Place and the crossing of the River Avon since at least the Saxon period. The medieval street pattern remains evident, with the Market Place established early as the centre of trading and civic activity. Over time, commercial premises, public buildings and residential property were constructed around this open space, forming the historic town core.
- 7.3 The Conservation Area, designated in 1971, includes this historic centre. Its significance derives from the survival of the street pattern, the mix of historic buildings from different periods, and the continuity of commercial activity within the town centre. Buildings have been altered or adapted repeatedly as the town has evolved. This pattern of managed change has shaped the present character of the Conservation Area.
- 7.4 No. 2 Market Place occupies a prominent position on the north side of the square. Although not listed, the building forms part of a continuous frontage that helps define the Market Place. Its scale is consistent with the surrounding commercial buildings although form and appearance are distinctly different. Having a narrow predominantly solid façade this building displays an imposing iconic classical ground floor frontage, although it lacks interest to the streetscape and does not promote that same visual engagement into the building other frontages do along Market Place, which larger offer wide transparent front windows. This solid frontage would have been a key positive feature for its previous use as a bank, although is not unlikely to be seen as a benefit to any other occupants.
- 7.5 The property was used as an HSBC bank until the lease ended in August 2023 and it has since been vacant. Continued vacancy of this commercial space could lead to deterioration of the building fabric.
- 7.6 The Conservation Area has experienced a gradual process of sensitive renewal in recent years, particularly evident in the refurbishment of the adjoining Burton building. That project involved stone repairs, the introduction of updated windows, and the reconfiguration of the ground-floor commercial frontage. Its completion shows how well-considered changes can maintain the townscape character while ensuring that buildings remain functional and attractive in a modern context.

- 7.7 The proposals for 2 Market Place follow the same principle in that they respect the building's existing architecture while updating elements that have been affected by past banking operations or that are required for contemporary use.

Impact of Proposed Changes on the Conservation Area

- 7.8 The proposed works preserve the appearance of the ashlar stone upper floors, with only the replacement of the existing timber sash windows on a like-for-like basis. This ensures that the key elevations that contribute to the significance of the Conservation Area remain unchanged in form and character. At ground-floor level, it is proposed to remove the night safe and the older ATM interventions in order to simplify the frontage and help reinstate and unclutter the façade that better relates to its historic surroundings. The existing black metal railings will remain in situ to retain the character of the building.
- 7.9 The night safe and ATM are/were both relics of the former bank use and were later additions (as depicted in Image 5), which shows the absence of the infill brick work and full length window to lower cill where the night safe is installed.



Image 5 – Historic front picture of 2 Market Place

- 7.10 To the rear, the removal of metal security bars and the replacement of windows with modern units will improve the appearance of an elevation that currently reflects its former specialised function rather than any heritage value. The works to the former safe area, including the removal of non-original concrete elements to form a small courtyard, do not affect any historic fabric. Rather, they facilitate the reinstatement of the original rear building line, provide better access and allow the building to function effectively in its new configuration.
- 7.11 Taking the proposals as a whole, the works will maintain the building's contribution to the Conservation Area and, in several respects, improve its appearance by removing incongruous elements that have accumulated over time. The changes are modest and sympathetic, and any impact on the Conservation Area is limited and falls well within the category of less than substantial harm under the NPPF. In this case, the public benefits are based on that the proposals secure the building's continued use, allow investment in its upkeep and improve the quality of the frontage.
- 7.12 Accordingly, the development preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and supports the objectives of Core Policy 58. It reflects the expectations of the NPPF, which encourages opportunities to better reveal significance and to ensure that heritage assets remain in active, viable use. The proposals therefore represent an appropriate and positive form of heritage-led change within the Conservation Area.

8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 This application seeks permission for a series of external alterations to 2 Market Place that will support the long-term use, maintenance and improvement of a prominent building within the Chippenham Conservation Area. The proposals respond directly to the building's transition from its former banking use and address a number of functional and visual issues that currently detract from its appearance and efficiency.
- 8.2 The works have been designed to respect the existing form and materials of the building, particularly the ashlar stone upper floors, which remain unchanged apart from like-for-like window replacements. At ground-floor level, the proposals rationalise the frontage by removing redundant features associated with the former bank, improving the quality of the shopfront and enhancing natural light to the internal accommodation. The alterations to the rear elevation and the creation of a small courtyard similarly focus on removing later additions of no heritage value to enable the building to function more effectively.
- 8.3 The heritage assessment demonstrates that the development preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and, in several respects, enhances it by reinstating a simpler, more coherent frontage and by removing incongruous security elements.
- 8.4 When considered against the requirements of the NPPF and Wiltshire Core Policies 57 and 58, the proposals represent an appropriate and proportionate form of development that respects the significance of the Conservation Area while facilitating the building's continued contribution to the vitality of Chippenham town centre. For these reasons, the application is considered acceptable in planning terms, and permission is therefore respectfully sought.

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