

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Application No: PL/2025/09524 and PL/2025/09523
Conversion of first and second floors to create two self-contained dwellings (a two bedroom flat and a two bedroom maisonette)
12 Maryport Street, Devizes, SN10 1AH

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

Recommendations:

☒	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 16 requires that **special regard** be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing 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 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 a Grade II listed building located in Devizes Conservation Area.

Proposal: The proposal seeks the conversion of the first and second floors to create two self-contained dwellings (a two bedroom flat and a two bedroom maisonette).

Relevant planning history: E/10/0137/LBC - Internal structural timber repairs on front facade at first floor. Construction of new wall in basement and repairs to basement wall and supporting piers. Local repairs to roof and internal ceiling repairs. Repairs to front parapet gutter. Construction of 60 minute fire retardant wall in roof space. Decoration to front and rear external elevation. (approve);

Issues: impact on the listed building, impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings, 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 applications are accompanied by a "Heritage Statement incorporating a Design & Access Statement" which provides sufficient information to understand the impact of the proposals and is proportionate to their scope. The requirements of the NPPF are therefore met in this respect.

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 building lies largely with its historic fabric and architecture - its form, layout and architectural expression/detailing and use of high-quality design materials which have significant aesthetic and architectural interest and which contribute to the character of the conservation area.

The interior of the building particularly at ground and first floor has, however, has been compromised by alteration during the modern period.

Assessment: The property is part of a old building straddling Maryport Street and Monday Market Street, and has a frontage on both. Party walls run at right angles from each street, resulting in a twist in the floor plan at approximately the middle point. The building is Grade II Listed and also lies within the Devizes Conservation Area.

The proposal seeks approval for the conversion of the upper floors of the building to residential use.

The front section of the building is three storey, with a parapet gutter running parallel to the Maryport Street with a clay pantile roof behind. The rear is comprised of a two storey extension, the roof of which runs at 90 degrees to the main roof, appearing newer in construction, with concrete interlocking roof tiles. This has king post timber trusses supporting timber purlins creating a vaulted ceiling.

The rendered frontage to Maryport Street is likely to date from the 18th century with the interior likely to include structure and materials from earlier dates. The painted brickwork rear elevation, facing Monday Market Street, appears to be Victorian. It has a sack door at first floor level, two conventional doors, two square windows probably of later date and a small painted timber shop front on the ground floor.

The building is currently organised as a hardware shop, with sales floors on ground and first, a cellar and staff facilities located on the second floor. Customers enter from Maryport Street, with staff access, fire escape and refuse collected from the rear, on Monday Market Street. A timber staircase from ground to first floor joins the two sales floors. This appears fairly recent in construction.

There has been much modification of the structure, internally, over the years, especially associated with the ground floor for the purpose of creating open space for trading. This has involved the insertion of steel beams and other structure, including masonry piers in the basement. The existence of two separate staircases from first to second floors indicates that the building may have been subdivided in half at some time in its history, before the rear was opened up as a sales area.

The loss of the timber staircase within the trading floor is not considered significant, relating as it does to a fairly recent use of the premises.

Creating a new entrance onto Monday Market Street is beneficial regarding the street scene.

There is currently little of the historic fabric available to view within the building. Removing the modern linings is likely to provide more information as to the original construction and the later modifications. There is potential for damage to the underlying finishes if the process is carried out in an unsympathetic manner, but if care is taken by a contractor with conservation experience, then the intervention is likely to lead to a beneficial outcome with regard to preservation of the interior. Removal of interior finishes by hand would need to be conditioned.

There is likely to be some form of support for the down-stand ceiling beam where it crosses the existing partition, whether in the form of a column or a more continuous support like a masonry

wall or timber partition. Once the nature and condition of the support has been determined it will be possible to devise a restoration plan, which would need to be conditioned.

Proposals for the existing sack door are neutral in historic fabric terms, as they will remain intact and brought back into functional use.

Creation of two dwellings within the original structure of the building would result in the introduction of much new material and change the internal layout of the building. The new layout, although nothing like earlier variations, would reinstate some of the former small scale granularity.

Rear elevation alterations would change the existing shop front, but would also introduce another door onto the street, increasing footfall. This is considered neutral in impact.

The overhaul and redecoration of the existing sash windows is essential maintenance, intended to extend the life of these components. The new roof lights would be installed into a relatively recent covering of concrete tiles, invisible from street level and is not considered harmful.

Whilst increased levels of insulation would not have a direct impact on the heritage asset, the reduction in the extremes of internal temperature are likely to be beneficial to the preservation of the fabric in the long run.

In conservation terms, the main harmful aspect in terms of fabric is the loss of the internal wall at first floor in the older part of the building (proposed maisonette B). This is proposed for removal in order to create open plan living. This wall in my view is one of the few surviving original interior walls of the building. The strong conservation preference is for this wall to remain.

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 such a design amendment is requested to the proposed internal layout.