



RCC TOWN PLANNING CONSULTANCY

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Development Management

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Dear Sir or Madam,

RE: REPLACEMENT CLADDING OF COMMERCIAL BUILDING, INTRODUCTION OF PARAPET ALONG FRONTAGE EAVES, RAISING ROOF OF PART OF BUILDING AND INSERTION OF HIGH-LEVEL WINDOWS

AT: SMALLBONE, HOPTON ROAD, HOPTON INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, DEVIZES SN10 2EU

This letter accompanies a full planning application relating to the above and is submitted on behalf of our client, Gaiger Brothers Limited. The works include recladding the building, introducing a parapet along the frontage eaves and raising the roof of the north east section of the building by 5.4m including insertion of additional high-level windows. The proposed alterations will improve and upgrade a dated commercial building on Hopton Industrial Estate, Devizes (see figure 1 below). It will also enable the installation of a modern storage system to improve efficiency and productivity.

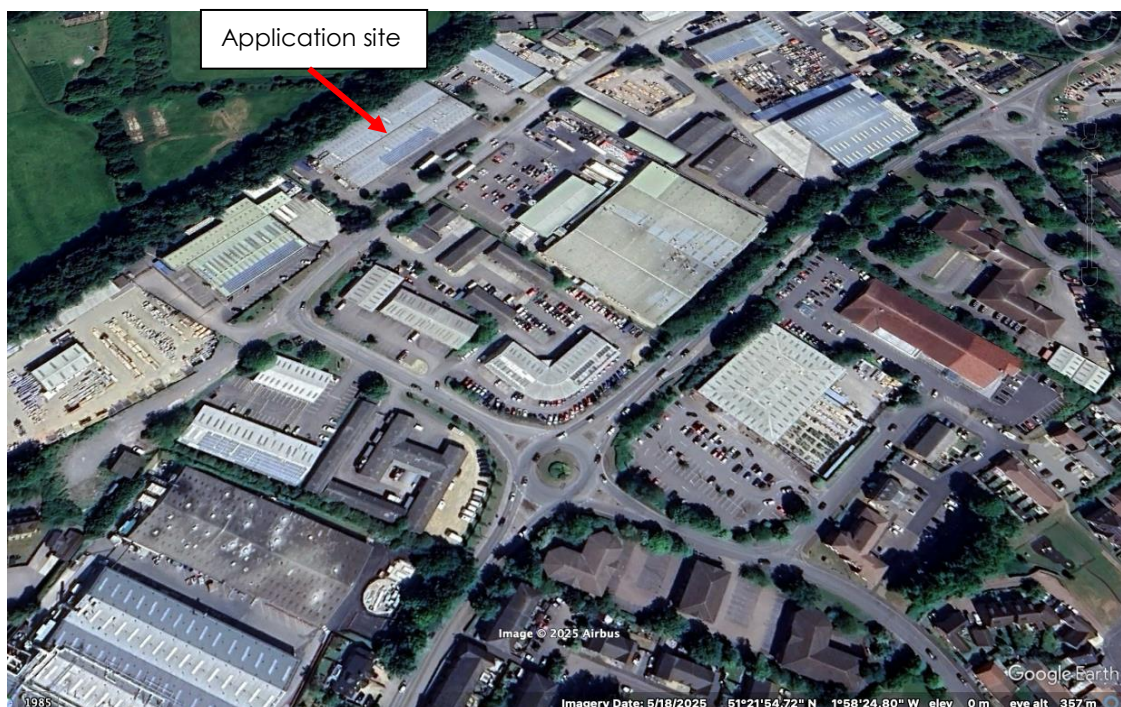


Figure 1 – Aerial photograph of application site



BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This application relates to a site that is located within the built area of the Market Town of Devizes on the north eastern side of the town and situated on the north-western side of the Hopton Industrial Estate, with vehicular access from Hopton Road. The site comprises a large commercial building situated towards the rear of the site with an area of hardstanding along the road frontage, providing parking, manoeuvring and delivery facilities. The site is located within the council's designated principal employment area.



Figure 2 –Existing cladding on the application building



Figure 3 – Hopton Road Frontage



The lower part of the front elevation of the building is constructed in brick with cladding to the upper portion. All other elevations have full height cladding (see figures 2 and 3 above).

The site lies within an area which is dominated by employment uses with large scale commercial buildings on three sides. A thick belt of mature trees and scrub mark the rear (north western) boundary of the site. There is a grass verge with individual mature trees along the Hopton Road frontage.

PROPOSAL

There are three elements to this proposal:

- The general upgrading of the building proposes the removal of the previous low-grade double skinned asbestos concrete cladding from the walls and roof of the building and its replacement with modern trapezoidal insulated metal cladding in Merlin Grey (RAL 180 40 05 BS18B25). The cladding is now to run full height on all elevations.
- The scheme also proposes raising of the roof of the three bays at the north east end of the building by 5.4m, with the insertion of additional windows at high level in the raised section of the southwest elevation to provide additional natural light
- The scheme also includes the introduction of a parapet along the frontage eaves for the remaining bays, increasing the height by 2m, with a small return on the south western end.

The submitted application includes a site location plan, existing and proposed elevational details and a roof plan.

POLICIES

The main planning policy framework relevant to this proposal is the Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015 (WCS) and the Government guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework updated 2024 (NPPF). In February 2024, the Council adopted the Wiltshire Design Guide which seeks to ensure that developments in Wiltshire are consistently of a high-quality design. The relevant policies and guidance are set out in the tables below:

WILTSHIRE CORE STRATEGY

Chapter	Title
CP1	Settlement strategy
CP2	Delivery strategy
CP12	Devizes Community Area
CP35	Existing employment sites



CP57	Ensuring high quality design and place shaping
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NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Chapter	Title
4	Decision making
11	Making effective use of land
12	Achieving well designed places

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

The main consideration for this proposal is the impact of the scheme on the character and appearance of the locality.

Policy CP57 of the WCS states that a high standard of design is required in all new developments, and proposals are expected to create a strong sense of place, drawing on local context and being complimentary to the locality. Similarly, section 12 of the NPPF, also highlights the significance of good design to the principles of sustainability and paragraph 127 requires that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character including the surrounding built environment.

Replacement cladding and introduction of a parapet along the front elevation

The existing cladding to the walls of the building is a low-grade mustard yellow asbestos concrete material, while the roof is pale grey with translucent panels and solar panels. The existing cladding is now looking rather run down and discoloured. The proposal is to replace all the cladding to the walls and roofs with a modern material - insulated merlin grey profiled sheeting. This will significantly improve the appearance of the building and furthermore, as the new cladding includes better insulation, it will also improve the thermal properties of the building. The cladding is to run full height on all elevations. Figure 3 over shows a building on the Hopton Industrial Estate with the same colour cladding.

In terms of the local context, the application site is embedded within an area dominated by large scale commercial buildings, the majority of which are clad in similar materials to those proposed in this application.

This application also proposes the introduction of a parapet along the front elevation. The parapet is included in the scheme at the same time as the cladding is being updated in order to modernise the appearance of this rather dated looking building. The parapet will be 2m high



along the front elevation and will return on the left-hand end of the building to meet the pitched roofline. The introduction of the parapet will provide a clean and crisp appearance to roadside façade and remove the heavy eaves overhang. Figure 4 below, shows the new Herman Miller building in Melksham, which had a similar roadside façade.



Figure 3 – Example of building with new Merlin Grey cladding



Figure 4 – Example of building with similar roadside façade



There have been a number of recent approvals on the nearby properties for similar recladding schemes for large scale commercial buildings with modern insulated merlin grey profiled sheeting. In considering a recent scheme at unit 8 Hopton Road (PL/2022/08104) the planning officer's reports notes that:

"The proposed replacement cladding is considered to provide a visual enhancement to the buildings in terms of replacing dilapidated materials with new and that the cladding will be in keeping with other commercial buildings within the immediate and wider vicinity and is therefore not considered to cause any harm to the character and appearance of the area."

It can therefore be considered that the replacement cladding and new parapet on the Smallbone building will enhance the existing building in visual terms and is in keeping with other similar commercial buildings in the immediate vicinity.

Raising the roof of three bays and insertion of additional high-level windows

The existing ridge height of the building is 6.66m with an eaves height of 5.7m. The proposal is to increase the ridge height of the last 3 bays at the north eastern end of the building to 12.06m, with an eaves height of 11.1m.

The increase in the height of this section of the building is required to enable the installation a new robotic storage system to modernise and improve productivity. The deep density storage system planned for the building will allow the maximisation of capacity by minimising or eliminating aisle space in the unit. These solutions store the largest quantity of products in the smallest footprint, utilising vertical and racking storage systems. These systems need high bays and high reach equipment to move products around. The new robotic storage system planned will not fit within the current building as it requires a minimum height of 10.5m (internally) for installation.

The scheme includes additional high-level windows in the south west elevation of the raised section of the building to provide additional natural light within the building.

Views of the raised section of the building from outside the industrial estate will be limited. To the rear there is a strong belt of mature trees, restricting views from the countryside to the north and west. From within the town, views of the building will be seen in the context of other existing large-scale commercial buildings that surround it. In these views it will also be seen against the backdrop of mature trees. As a result, it is considered that the resulting increase in height will not have a significant visual impact.

In views within the industrial estate, the resulting building is considered to be of an appropriate scale in keeping with the overall appearance of the industrial area. The mature trees growing along the grass verge to the front of the site will help to filter these views and assimilate the building.



In considering the issue of the visual impact of the increased height of part of the Smallbone building, it is noted that within the Hopton Industrial Estate, the Council granted consent for a taller building on the Latchways site. This building has a height of 11m high and is sited in a considerably more open location adjacent to the main A361 approach road into the town with less large buildings around it. The Smallbone site is embedded into the industrial estate, where the additional height would have less visual impact than the Latchways building.

In considering the visual impact of the Latchways proposal, the officer's report notes that the site is visible in long distance views, particularly from the A361 when one enters the town from the Marlborough direction, stating that *"As one enters the town from the higher downland, views across to the industrial estate are evident."*

The report however goes on to state that:

"At just over 11m in height the roofline of the building (in parts) will be visible being one of the tallest buildings on the estate - but this will be glimpsed against the backdrop of the remainder of the estate and the proposed landscaping scheme will help to filter these views and assimilate the building into its edge of settlement location."

The report also notes that within the estate, the building is considered to be of an appropriate scale and design and in keeping with the overall appearance of the industrial area. The report therefore concludes that overall, the visual impact is acceptable, and that the development will be a welcomed visual improvement to the area.

The current proposed raising of the roof of part of the Smallbone building is necessary to modernise and improve productivity on the site. For the reasons set out above, the increase in height of part of the building will have minimal visual impact, and it is therefore considered to be acceptable.

The overall scheme is therefore considered to comply with the relevant design criteria of policy CP57 of the WCS. The development will also accord with Section 12 of the NPPF, which highlights the significance of good design to the principles of sustainability.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we submit that the proposed development does not result in any material harm and, moreover, will improve the appearance and thermal quality of the building and aid the modernisation and improvement of productivity on the site. It complies with both local planning policies and national planning guidance and represents a sustainable form of development. The Council is therefore requested to approve the planning application

I trust this is sufficient information for you to consider this scheme but please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.



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Yours faithfully,

Jenny Foster

Jenny Foster BA DipTP
RCC Town Planning Consultancy