

From: Nigel <nigel@[REDACTED]>

Sent: 14 January 2026 08:37

To: Stockley, Samantha <Samantha.Stockley@wiltshire.gov.uk>

Cc: Toby Bartholomew <tobybartholomew@wadworth.co.uk>

Subject: RE: PL/2025/09823 CP49 – Marketing Evidence and Viability Justification for 1 High Street, Ramsbury

Dear Samantha,

Further to your email below we respond as follows.

We acknowledge the policy intent of CP49 in seeking to safeguard rural services and community facilities. However, we consider that the particular circumstances of this site justify a pragmatic and proportionate application of the policy, and that the submitted Planning Statement and viability appraisal together provide robust evidence that the former shop is no longer economically viable for continued commercial or community use. In this context, we do not consider that a formal marketing exercise would add any material value to the assessment of the proposal.

The majority of the application site (No.1 High Street) is already in established residential use. The proposed change of use would not result in any external alterations, would not harm residential amenity, and would preserve the mixed-use character of the High Street and the wider Conservation Area.

While CP49 seeks to retain community services where possible, its underlying purpose, reflecting Strategic Objective 6 of the Core Strategy, is to ensure that facilities are protected unless they are no longer needed or there is alternative provision elsewhere. Ramsbury continues to benefit from (a) an existing post office and (b) a separate convenience store within the village, and the loss of this small former shop unit would not result in a shortfall in local provision. In practice, sustaining a third retail unit of this scale in a village of this size is not realistic, and the closure of the former shop reflects long-established changes in rural retail patterns rather than a short-term or speculative decision.

The submitted viability appraisal provides an assessment of realistic alternative uses, including continued retail as well as alternative community uses. It clearly demonstrates that both options would result in significant financial losses of approximately £34,000. By contrast, the residential integration of the unit into the remainder of no.1 is shown to be the only viable option, generating a level of return acceptable to mainstream lenders. We therefore submit that the fundamental barrier to the retention of the unit in commercial or community use is viability, not a lack of marketing.

This approach is also consistent with national policy and legislative changes introduced over the last few years (e.g. Class MA) which acknowledges declining demand for retail space and actively promotes flexibility and adaptive re-use of buildings. Although permitted development rights do not apply in this case (due to the listed status of the building and location within the National Landscape), they nonetheless demonstrate the reduced emphasis on retaining redundant commercial units at all costs.

It is also important, when looking at the 'Planning Balance', to emphasise that this application relates to a Grade II listed building within a conservation area. The former shop is currently in a poor state of repair and requires significant and urgent investment – this investment only being viable through a residential use. If this cannot be secured, the heritage asset will remain redundant and with lack of investment its state of repair will continue to decline. The proposed residential integration enables the long-term repair, conservation and active use of this part of the listed building, with only limited and sensitive internal alterations and no external change.

Taken as a whole, the proposal accords with the spirit and objectives of CP49. The village retains alternative retail provision; the former shop has been demonstrated to be commercially unviable; and the proposal delivers clear heritage, social and environmental benefits by securing the long-term future of a listed building in a sustainable location.

In this specific context, we respectfully submit that requiring a formal marketing exercise would be disproportionate and would not provide any meaningful additional evidence to inform the decision. We therefore consider that the application can be supported on the basis of the information already submitted, and we would ask that the proposal be assessed accordingly. I look forward to receiving your comments.

Kind regards

Nigel

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