

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Application No: PL/2025/09865 and PL/2025/09861
External alterations to replace existing external signage with new branding and repainting shop frontage to match new branding.
Haine and Smith Partnership LLP, 31 The Brittox, Devizes, SN10 1AJ

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 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 property is a Grade II listed building located in Devizes Conservation Area. The property also affects the setting of numerous other listed buildings in the locality.

Proposal: The proposal seeks external alterations to replace existing external signage with new branding and repainting shop frontage to match new branding.

Relevant planning history: K/79/0028/AD - Non-illuminated hanging sign (dismissed on appeal); E/2012/0752/LBC - Fit new timber shopfront, new fascia signage, canvas awnings and shopfit ground floor interior (approved); K/34075/L - Retention of signage to front of shop (approve); K/33740/A - The erection of a fascia board and projecting sign (approved).

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, whilst the applications are accompanied by a "Design and Heritage Statement" the document provides limited information about the building and fails to provide any objective assessment of the fabric affected, its date or significance or of the impact of the proposals 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 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.

Assessment: Nos. 29-32, The Brittox is a Grade II listed terrace divided into 4 houses and shops and is located in Devizes Conservation Area.

The proposed works are to secure a Listed Building Consent for changing the existing external branding on the fascia above the shopfront, changing the branding on the hanging sign and repainting of the shop front with an alternative colour scheme.

The brand, Haine & Smith Opticians, are undergoing a change in their branding, for which they wish to remove the existing lettering and replace with new lettering. The existing hanging sign is also proposed to be replaced.

The proposed signage is appropriately positioned on the fascia of the shopfront of 31 The Brittox and is modest in scale. Hanging and fascia signs are an established characteristic of the commercial frontage along the Brittox, where a mixture of traditional and contemporary shop signage forms part of the street's long standing retail identity. The existing timber fascia would be retained and reused.

The signage is considered to have a neutral impact on the significance of the Grade II listed building and the conservation area. The signage is confined to the ground floor, is non-reflective materials, and is restrained in design and colour palette.

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 impact of the proposals on heritage assets will be neutral and the requirements of current conservation legislation, policy or guidance are considered to be met and there is therefore no objection to the approval of the application.