

APPLICATION FOR FULL-PLANNING PERMISSION

CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2025/09823
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	1 High Street, Ramsbury, Marlborough, SN8 2PA
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Change of use of former retail space to part of existing dwellinghouse, replacement rear extension and internal alterations
RECOMMENDATION:	Refusal

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The application site is at 1 High Street, Ramsbury, situated at the eastern end of Ramsbury High Street, before entering The Square. The property is a Grade II-listed building located within the Ramsbury Conservation Area. The North Wessex Downs National Landscape washes over Ramsbury. A mix of residential and former commercial uses characterises the High Street.

The site forms part of a continuous frontage of historic buildings along the High Street. The building itself is predominantly of red brick construction under a slate roof, with a modest former retail unit occupying part of the ground floor and a small attic storage space above. The retail space operated as Hills Stores until 2009 and subsequently as a charity shop until January 2024. Since then, details suggest it has remained vacant. To the rear of the site is a small rear garden and a modern conservatory.

The High Street benefits from a strong historic character, with listed and notable unlisted buildings. The wider village is well-served by local facilities, including a post office and convenience store, and is located approximately 6.5 miles from Marlborough and 5.5 miles from Hungerford.

PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks the change of use of a small former retail unit within No. 1 High Street, Ramsbury, to form part of the existing dwellinghouse, alongside the replacement of a modern rear conservatory and internal alterations.

The proposal outlines that the works will be delivered in three stages:

- (1) integration of the former shop into the residential layout, including reopening a historic doorway and installing a new staircase to access a bedroom within the attic storage space;
 - (2) removal of the existing conservatory and construction of a replacement extension in its place with a slightly larger footprint; It will comprise a glazed timber frame with a parapet finished in a single-ply lead grey membrane and a glazed roof lantern; and
 - (3) internal reconfiguration to create an open-plan kitchen, dining, and living area, together with essential repairs to the listed structure.
- (4) Remove the small rear extension roof with a replacement slate roof.

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
PL/2025/10003 - Listed building consent (Alt/Ext) – Change of use of former retail space to part of existing dwellinghouse, replacement rear extension and internal alterations
K/33492/L - Listed building consent Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 22/11/1996 – The demolition of existing lean-to structure. Construction of lean-to conservatory incorporating existing WC.
K/85/0229/LB - Listed building consent Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 9/5/1985 – Demolition of chimney, new windows to rear elevation, conv. of rear lobby to cloakroom and alterations to cellar access

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Statutory Legislation:

National Planning Policy:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- National Design Guide

Development Plan:

The development plan for Wiltshire comprises the *Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)* (adopted January 2015) and any made neighbourhood plans, which remains the principal statutory planning document guiding development across the county. In line with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Though the development plan is considered as a whole, those parts deemed to be particularly relevant to this application are listed below:

The adopted *Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)*, with particular regard to:

- Core Policy 1 Settlement Strategy;
- Core Policy 2 Delivery Strategy;
- Core Policy 14 Spatial Strategy Marlborough Community Area
- Core Policy 35 Existing Employment Land
- Core Policy 49 Protection of rural services and community facilities
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Core Policy 51 Landscape
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 58 Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment;
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development;
- Core Policy 67 Flood Risk;
- Core Policy 68 Water Resources;

Draft Wiltshire Local Plan Policies

- Policy 1: Settlement Strategy
- Policy 2: Delivery Strategy
- Policy 3: Reserve sites and broad locations for growth
- Policy 4: Addressing climate change
- Policy 5: Securing infrastructure provision from new development
- Policies 44- 51: Swindon Area Strategy
- Policies 64 – 75: Economic, tourism, retail and transport
- Policies 85 – 101: Sustainability, ecology, water and landscape, heritage, air quality

The above are currently the strategic policies within the emerging Local Plan. The Wiltshire Local Plan review is advancing through its preparatory stages and is currently being examined. In accordance with the advice set out in paragraph 49 of the NPPF, the emerging Plan is capable of carrying weight in decision-making.

Neighbourhood Plan:

None

Supplementary Planning Documents and other Guidance:

- Wiltshire Design Guide (adopted April 2024)
- Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026, adopted 2015 - including the Car Parking Strategy and Cycling Strategy, adopted 2015
- A Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Wiltshire: Wiltshire's Natural Environment Plan 2022-2030
- Ramsbury Conservation Area Statement (2003)

ISSUES

The main issues that need to be addressed in this case include:

- Whether the development is acceptable in principle (CP 1 and 2)
- Whether the scheme protects rural services and community facilities (CP49)
- Whether the scheme constitutes high quality design (CP 57)
- Whether the scheme would have an acceptable impact upon the reasonable living conditions of the adjoining occupants (CP 57)
- Whether the scheme would preserve or enhance the historic environment (CP 58)
- Whether the scheme would have an acceptable landscape impact (CP 51)
- Whether the proposal would have a negative effect upon highway safety, including if there is sufficient parking for the proposed development (CP 61 and 64)
- Whether the site can be adequately drained without increasing flood risk elsewhere (CP 67)
- Whether there would be any harmful impacts upon protected species or priority habitats (CP 50)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WC Conservation: No Comments received at the writing of the recommendation.

WC Ecology: No Comments received at the writing of the recommendation.

WC Drainage: No objection

The site is at low overall flood risk and the minor nature of the proposals would not result in a significant increase in impermeable area or flood risk compared with the existing baseline.

Parish/Town Council: No Objection

Ramsbury and Axford Parish Council would like to support this application. The applicant was very kind in letting the charity shop stay in situ after they moved in until it could be relocated and have been insistent on keeping the aesthetics of the former shop frontage as it is in a conspicuous part of the High Street and conservation area.

REPRESENTATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), the application was publicised by way of:

- Neighbour notification letters sent to adjoining and nearby properties;
- A site notice displayed near the site;

These methods were used to inform interested parties and provide a period of 21 days for comments to be submitted.

No representations were received in response to this application.

ASSESSMENT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

In accordance with this statutory requirement, this application has been assessed against the relevant policies of the Development Plan, including the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and, where applicable, any made Neighbourhood Plans. Consideration has also been given to the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as a material consideration in the assessment.

Principle of Development

Policy Context

Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy of the WCS establishes a hierarchy of settlements to guide where development should be focused. The policy prioritises growth in:

- Principal Settlements (e.g., Salisbury, Chippenham, Trowbridge) – main focus for strategic growth.

- Market Towns – support local services and employment; suitable for sustainable development.
- Local Service Centres – smaller towns and villages with a range of services; limited development supported.
- Large and Small Villages – development should be limited and respond to local needs.
- Outside the defined settlements – development is strictly controlled and generally not supported unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy of the WCS sets out how development will be distributed and delivered across Wiltshire. The policy emphasises:

- Sustainable patterns of growth, reducing the need to travel and supporting local services.
- Development should be plan-led, aligning with the settlement strategy and supported by infrastructure.
- Windfall development (not allocated in plans) must still comply with the principles of sustainable development.
- Development outside settlement boundaries is generally not permitted, unless it meets specific policy exceptions (as set out in paragraph 4.25 of the WCS).

Together, CP1 and CP2 ensure that new development is strategically located, sustainable, and supports the character and function of Wiltshire's communities.

Core Policy 49 requires applicants to demonstrate that a rural shop or community facility is no longer economically viable and that all reasonable options to retain it have been fully explored. The policy requires that in order for such proposals to be supported, a comprehensive marketing plan will need to be undertaken and the details submitted with any planning application. This normally includes a period of sustained active marketing at a realistic price, supported by evidence of enquiries and offers, as well as an assessment of feasible alternative uses such as shared, reduced, or community-run models. Without clear, robust evidence that these avenues have been exhausted, the loss of the facility will not comply with CP49.

The NPPF (read as a whole) is a material consideration and supports the plan-led approach, the vitality of centres/community facilities, and sustainable travel patterns by ensuring day-to-day needs are met locally.

Assessment

The site lies within Ramsbury, a Large Village under the Wiltshire settlement hierarchy, where the development strategy seeks to meet day-to-day needs locally and minimise the need to travel (WCS CP1 and CP2). The proposal seeks to convert the redundant empty retail space for residential use. The loss of a village shop/community facility engages Core Policy 49.

The applicant's submissions comprise: (i) a viability appraisal (Strakers, 10 December 2025) indicating retail/office re-use would result in a stated loss of ~£34,000 and that residential integration would yield a surplus of ~£64,000; (ii) a short letter from Stibbard Property (16 January 2026) describing the unit's poor condition and predicting weak village rents; and (iii) a supporting statement (DRA Architects, 14 January 2026) and a Planning/Design & Access Statement (RCC, December 2025) which argue that formal marketing is unnecessary because alternative provision exists in the village (post office and convenience store) and because

heritage investment depends on residential re-use. The Parish Council confirms that the unit was in community/retail use as a charity shop as does the Design and Access Statement before its relocation, evidencing occupation for a community-serving purpose, although a specific time scale has not been provided.

The proposal fails the evidential threshold of CP49. No sustained active marketing has been undertaken or evidenced (duration, platforms, asking price/rent, enquiry/offer logs, comparables), nor is there evidence that reasonable alternatives have been tested (e.g., minimal essential repairs with re-use, part-residential over retained retail, shared/community-run/CIC models, short-let/pop-up operation).

The Strakers appraisal is expressly not a formal valuation and was based on a cursory inspection without market testing; the Stibbard letter is similarly unsupported by marketing data. In CP49 terms, desk viability is not a substitute for market-based evidence showing there is no viable retail/community demand. Given the former charity-shop use recorded by the Parish Council, the absence of marketing/alternatives testing is particularly significant and prevents the LPA from concluding that no operator would come forward now or following essential repairs. The proposal fails to provide any evidence in respect of marketing. It is clear that the property has not been marketing for sale or rent on reasonable terms that would take into account the condition/status of the build and market conditions. The proposal therefore conflicts with CP49.

CP1 and CP2 expect Large Villages to retain local services and thereby reduce the need to travel. In the absence of CP49-compliant evidence that the premises are no longer viable for retail/community use, the loss of a day-to-day facility within the village would erode local service provision and is therefore contrary to the settlement and delivery strategy for Ramsbury.

The NPPF reaffirms that decisions are plan-led and that planning should support the vitality of centres, retain valued community facilities, and promote sustainable patterns of movement by meeting day-to-day needs locally. Allowing the loss of the shop without marketing/alternative evidence would be inconsistent with those aims in a Large Village context. References by the applicant to Class MA (commercial-to-residential PD) have limited weight here: PD does not apply to this listed building and, in any event, the Development Plan policies—specifically CP49—remain the appropriate test for loss of retail in rural settlements.

The applicant's case cites heritage benefits (investment/repair; retention of the shopfront; modest internal works; replacement of the modern rear conservatory). While these carry some weight under the NPPF and WCS CP58, they do not displace the requirement to satisfy CP49 where the planning harm arises from the unjustified loss of a community-serving premises. In policy terms, heritage/public benefits should be considered alongside evidence that all reasonable options to retain a retail/community function have been exhausted; that evidence is absent here. There LPA is not convinced at this stage that conversion to residential is the optimal viable use for the building.

The proposal also includes the replacement of the existing modern conservatory at the rear of the property. This element of the scheme is considered acceptable in principle, as the structure is located to the rear of the dwelling, where such domestic extensions are a common and

characteristic feature of residential properties within the village. Accordingly, the conservatory proposal raises no concerns in principle however this is subject to detailed assessment against the relevant design, heritage, and residential amenity policies to ensure the final form accords with the Development Plan.

Conclusion

Taking the Development Plan and material considerations together, the proposal results in the unjustified loss of a village shop/community facility contrary to WCS CP49, with consequential conflict with CP1 and CP2, the settlement strategy of the WCS. The NPPF (read as a whole) supports retaining local services and minimising the need to travel, overall, the principle of the change of use results in a policy conflict.

Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

Policy Context

Core Policy 57 of the WCS requires high-quality design that:

- Enhances local character.
- Responds to the natural, historic, and built environment.
- Retains important features (e.g., trees, hedges).
- Supports sustainable construction and compatibility with surrounding uses.
- Creates safe, legible, and accessible spaces.

Section 12 of the NPPF emphasises design that is:

- Visually attractive.
- Functionally effective.
- Contributes to the quality of the built environment.

The Wiltshire Design Guide encourages sensitivity to local character, materials, and architectural styles and supports modern living standards while maintaining aesthetic and functional quality.

Building for a Healthy Life Framework promotes healthy, inclusive, and sustainable places. The document encourages:

- Walkability.
- Access to green space.
- Active design principles for well-being.

Assessment

The scheme involves only modest internal alterations and the replacement of a modern rear conservatory, with no changes proposed to the established High Street frontage. Crucially, the historic shopfront is retained, preserving the visual rhythm and mixed-use character of the streetscene and maintaining the building's contribution to the Conservation Area. This approach aligns with the NPPF Section 12, which seeks visually attractive and contextually sensitive design, and with the Wiltshire Design Guide, which encourages the use of locally appropriate materials and respect for architectural character. The limited works also avoid harm to important fabric and ensure compatibility with surrounding uses.

Turning to the replacement conservatory, having regard to the Wiltshire Design Guide (SPD, 2024), which elaborates on WCS Core Policy 57 and expects householder extensions to be context-led, visually subordinate and to use materials and forms that respect the host building, rear additions such as conservatories should read as modest, recessive elements that preserve the legibility of the original elevation and avoid visually dominant roof features or artificial detailing that would compete with historic fabric. In this case, while a rear conservatory is acceptable in principle, the proposed roof lantern introduce a bulk and prominence inconsistent with the Guide's expectations for a lightweight, subordinate form beneath first-floor openings; a simpler, lean-to profile such as existing would be more consistent with the SPD's emphasis on scale, massing and locally appropriate materials in sensitive/heritage settings. Accordingly, as submitted, the design does not convincingly accord with CP57 as expanded by the Wiltshire Design Guide.

Conclusion

Accordingly, while the historic shopfront is retained and the principle of a modest rear conservatory is accepted, the specific design (notably the roof form including lantern) fails to meet the WCS Core Policy 57 and Wiltshire Design Guide (SPD, 2024) expectations for a subordinate, context-led extension; moreover, the proposed conversion of the retail space has not been justified under WCS Core Policy 49 (Protection of Rural Services and Community Facilities), so as submitted the scheme does not accord with the Development Plan and associated design guidance.

Impact on Heritage Assets

Policy Context

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 (Listed Building Consent)/Section 66 (Planning Permission) requires that special regard be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Paragraph 58B of the Planning Act 1990 requires that in considering whether to grant planning permission or permission in principle for the development of land in England which affects a registered park and garden, the LPA must have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the asset or its setting.

Section 72(1) of the Act 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 for planning. Chapter 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development. In particular:

Paragraph 208 requires LPAs should "avoid or minimise any conflict" between the heritage asset's conservation (which includes achieving its optimum viable use) and any aspect of a proposal.

Paragraph 210 requires local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable new uses and of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraphs 212 requires “great weight” to be given to an asset’s conservation “irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.”

Paragraph 213 advises that harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should require “clear and convincing justification”.

Paragraphs 213-215(214-216) require a balanced approach with any harm which would be caused being weighed against the potential public benefits which might be achieved.

Paragraph 220 advises that not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm or less than substantial harm as appropriate.

The 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 and non-designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance and encourages proposals which improve the condition of heritage assets at risk.

The Council’s Core Strategy CP 57: Ensuring high quality design requires a high quality of design in all new developments. The policy requires applicants to “demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through (amongst other things) responding to the value of the natural and historic environment and being sympathetic to and conserving historic buildings and landscapes. Development is required to respond positively to the existing in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting.

Assessment

The proposal affects a Grade II listed building within the Ramsbury Conservation Area. The significance of No. 1 High Street derives from its evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values. Evidently, the building retains early–19th–century fabric, including its diaper brickwork, slate roof, and original sash windows, which collectively offer insight into local construction techniques and domestic/commercial building forms of the period. Historically, the property illustrates the evolution of Ramsbury’s High Street, having operated as a village shop for much of the 19th and 20th centuries, thereby reflecting the longstanding pattern of mixed residential and retail uses characteristic of rural settlements. Aesthetically, the building possesses the understated architectural qualities typical of its era, expressed through its well-proportioned three-bay frontage, moulded sash boxes, dentilled eaves and refined central doorway with reeded doorcase and bracketed canopy, all of which contribute positively to the streetscape of the conservation area. Communally, the building holds local associative value through its

long-standing role as a village store and later as the community charity shop, forming part of collective memory and contributing to the social identity of Ramsbury's High Street. Together, these values justify its designation and underline the importance of sustaining its fabric and character through sensitive future adaptation.

The High Street frontage and historic shopfront contribute positively to the listed building's significance and to the mixed-use townscape of Ramsbury's core. The scheme proposes modest internal alterations and a replacement rear conservatory, with no change to the established High Street elevation, and retains the historic shopfront, thereby sustaining the streetscene's visual rhythm and the asset's contribution to the Conservation Area. This aspect aligns with the NPPF Section 12 focus on contextually sensitive design and with the Wiltshire Design Guide (SPD, 2024), which elaborates CP57 expectations for locally appropriate materials and character-led design.

Turning to the rear elevation, the former lean-to conservatory was a monopitch addition that nested beneath the first-floor cill line, reading as a recessive, subordinate element. By contrast, the proposed design introduces a glazed roof lantern design. While the eaves height may be acceptable in principle, the lantern's bulk and prominence would visually compete with the rear composition, diminishing the legibility of the original elevation. In a listed context, the Wiltshire Design Guide expects householder extensions to be modest and subordinate, avoiding dominant roof features. On this basis, the conservatory as submitted is determined to only result in less-than-substantial harm to the character of the listed building's rear elevation, harm is still harm no matter how low level and as such the application would require clear and convincing justification under the NPPF, which this application does not. The benefits are wholly private.

The use of the listed building as shop contributes to its architectural and historic interest and its continued use as a shop is an integral part of the value and significance of the listed building. The loss of this use will therefore cause some harm to the listed building. This harm should be weighed against securing its optimum viable use. The best use will often be the original or historic use of the building and the continuation of that use should be the first option, however it is acknowledged that any use needs to be viable to secure the future of the heritage asset. In this particular case however there has been no marketing for sale or rent on reasonable terms. Such terms should take into account the condition/status of the build and market conditions. It should be expected that accurate renovation and upgrading costs are reflected in the marketing guide price. In the absence of this exercise being undertaken the LPA cannot accept that reuse for residential purposes are the optimum viable use in this case.

The conversion of the ground-floor retail unit to residential removes a community-serving use that has been in occupation as a (charity shop until January 2024), thereby engaging the plan-led policy requirement in WCS CP49. On the current record, no sustained marketing on reasonable terms or alternative testing has been undertaken to demonstrate that the premises are no longer economically viable for retail or any reasonable community use. In heritage terms, the applicant points to repair/investment benefits, but public benefit cannot be established where CP49's evidential requirements are unmet, and thus cannot outweigh the identified harm to the heritage asset arising from the rear design.

No comments have been received from the Council's Conservation Officer at the time of drafting; however, having regard to CP57, CP58, the SPD and the NPPF, the LPA must attach great weight to conservation and ensure that any harm is clearly justified and outweighed by public benefits. In this instance, due to the roof lantern's visual impact and the absence of CP49-compliant evidence to demonstrate public benefits from the loss of the shop use, the proposal is considered harmful to the setting and significance of the listed building and the Conservation Area, and the harm is not outweighed by demonstrated public benefits.

Conclusion

The application preserves the High Street frontage and shopfront, which is welcomed. However, the rear conservatory design would cause less-than-substantial harm that is not clearly justified, and the conversion of the retail unit has not been supported by CP49-compliant evidence necessary to establish public benefit. Consequently, the proposal fails to meet the statutory and policy tests in ss.16/66 & s.72(1) of the 1990 Act, NPPF Chapter 16, WCS CP57/CP58, and the Wiltshire Design Guide (SPD, 2024)

Amenity

Policy Context

Core Policy 57 (Point vii) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to respect the amenity of existing occupants and ensure appropriate amenity levels for future residents.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly Paragraph 135, reinforces the need for development to provide a high standard of amenity for both existing and future users.

Assessment

The change of use of the former retail unit to residential would provide a ground-floor workspace and a first-floor en-suite bedroom, with a replacement window proposed in the gable end to allow natural light and outlook towards the gable of No. 6 High Street and the side access. These would not result in overlooking or loss of privacy, given the existing built context and the modest scale of the intervention.

The building already forms part of a mixed-use High Street comprising residential, commercial, and retail properties, where residential uses are commonplace and visually integrated. The replacement rear extension will occupy the footprint of the existing conservatory with only a slight increase in size, and no balcony or roof terrace is proposed. Other works are internal and will not give rise to overbearing impacts, loss of light, or harm to neighbouring amenity.

The proposed layout meets national space standards and, given the High Street location with access to local shops and services, the loss of the small retail unit will not compromise community access to amenities.

Conclusion

Overall, the scheme is considered to comply with WCS CP57 and the objectives of the NPPF by safeguarding amenity and reinforcing the character of the area.

Highways Impacts and Parking

Policy Context

Transport implications are a key factor in assessing planning applications, especially for larger developments. Proposals must demonstrate:

- Safe and suitable access for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and those with mobility impairments.
- No severe residual impacts on the surrounding highway network.
- Promotion of sustainable travel, reducing reliance on private vehicles.
- Adequate parking and cycle provision, in line with adopted standards.
- Protection and enhancement of public rights of way and active travel routes.

Relevant policies include Core Policies 60–64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, supported by the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan, Car Parking Strategy, and Cycling Strategy. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and LTN 1/20 (DfT) provide further design guidance for active travel infrastructure.

Proposals must also ensure safe access for refuse collection vehicles and comply with the Wiltshire Council Waste Storage and Collection SPD (2017).

Where necessary, Transport Assessments or Statements should be submitted to evaluate impacts and identify mitigation. Planning conditions or legal agreements may be used to secure off-site improvements, travel plans, or contributions to sustainable transport infrastructure.

Assessment

The site is an established dwelling with a small former shop area fronting High Street, Ramsbury. The application proposes no new or altered vehicular or pedestrian access, nor any highway works. The change of use integrates the former shop space into the dwelling and creates one additional bedroom within the building, alongside a small rear replacement conservatory. The application form confirms the existing residential use with a vacant shop, and does not seek alterations to the public highway or access.

The conversion removes a very small retail unit (previously low-intensity footfall) and replaces it with purely residential floorspace. In transport terms, this represents an overall neutral to marginal decrease in trip generation when considered against a potential re-occupation of the retail unit; any uplift associated with a single additional bedroom is de minimis and would not give rise to a severe residual impact on the local network. This accords with the LTP/parking strategy approach for minor residential development where changes in trip rates are negligible and managed within existing street patterns. Given the central village location and walkable access to local services, no uplift in car parking is warranted.

Conclusion

Overall, the proposal does not alter access, does not generate material additional trips, and would not cause severe residual impacts on the local network. The scheme is acceptable in highways safety and capacity terms and accords with WCS CP60–CP64 and the supporting LTP Car Parking Strategy.

Ecology and Biodiversity

Policy Context

The ecological impact of development is a key planning consideration, especially for larger schemes. Proposals must assess and address potential effects on:

- Protected species
- Priority habitats
- Ecological networks
- Green and blue infrastructure

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to:

- Avoid harm to ecological assets.
- Deliver measurable Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), in line with the Environment Act 2021.
- Support habitat restoration and connectivity.
- Integrate biodiversity into site design.

The Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy (2022–2030) promotes nature recovery, ecosystem services, and habitat connectivity through development.

Unless exempt, National policy requires a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for major developments, demonstrated via:

- Biodiversity Metric calculations
- Ecological assessments (e.g. PEAs, Phase 1 surveys, protected species surveys)

Assessment

The works relate to an existing Grade II listed building, with no external alterations to the fabric of the structure aside from the replacement of a modern rear conservatory. An Ecological Impact Assessment (Ethos Environmental Planning, 19 Nov 2025) was submitted and found the site to comprise an existing building and hardstanding only, with negligible potential for roosting bats and no evidence of bat use; The report notes proximity to the River Kennet (~100 m south) for general context, but confirms the development is highly unlikely to impact roosting bats. It also advises standard breeding bird timing controls (avoid March–August or exclude birds prior to works) due to observed pigeons

On Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), the assessment states the site contains no habitats (entirely developed/sealed surfaces) and therefore the proposal is exempt from BNG requirements; this is consistent with the de minimis nature of the works (internal refurbishment and replacement of a modern rear conservatory) and the absence of habitat loss. At the time of drafting, no comments have been received from the Council's Ecology Officer. In light of the submitted evidence, the scheme would avoid harm to ecological assets and does not trigger BNG obligations.

Conclusion

The proposal is therefore determined to be compliant with WCS CP50 and the relevant NPPF ecology safeguards

Landscape and Visual Impact

Policy Context

Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to:

- Protect, conserve, and enhance landscape character and quality.
- Respect local distinctiveness, key views, and visual receptors.
- Give particular weight to impacts on National Landscapes (formerly AONBs) and locally valued landscapes.

The Wiltshire Design Guide SPD (2024) promotes a context-led approach, encouraging integration with natural features and settlement patterns while avoiding visual intrusion.

The Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy (2022–2030) supports landscape protection through green infrastructure, habitat connectivity, and nature-based solutions.

The NPPF emphasises the need to protect and enhance valued landscapes, particularly those with scenic, historic, or ecological significance. Planning decisions should:

- Recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.
- Safeguard key views, local distinctiveness, and landscape settings.
- Ensure development is well-integrated into its surroundings and avoids visual intrusion, especially in sensitive or designated areas.

Landscape impact must be considered alongside biodiversity, heritage, and green infrastructure objectives, with mitigation measures encouraged where harm cannot be avoided. The village of Ramsbury is washed over by the North Wessex Downs National Landscape

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF requires that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.

Under Section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, LPAs and other relevant authorities must now “seek to further” the statutory purposes of National Landscapes (formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty), replacing the previous duty to merely “have regard to” them.

This is an active duty, requiring authorities to take reasonable and proportionate steps to support the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, special qualities, and key characteristics of these designated areas when exercising any function that affects them.

Assessment

The site lies within the heart of Ramsbury village and is washed over by the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, a designation that recognises the area’s high scenic value. The proposed works are small-scale and limited in nature, comprising the replacement of an existing modern conservatory with a modest extension, joinery repairs, and a replacement roof using materials and colours that match the existing slate and traditional finishes. No significant external alterations are proposed beyond these improvements, and the overall footprint of the building will remain largely unchanged. Given the contained village centre location, the established built form of the High Street, and the sympathetic design approach,

the proposal will not adversely affect the wider landscape setting or the special qualities of the National Landscape. Instead, it will enhance the character of the listed building and its contribution to the conservation area without introducing visual intrusion or harm to the rural setting.

Conclusion

Overall, the scheme is considered to comply with WCS CP51 and the objectives of the NPPF by safeguarding setting of Ramsbury and the national Landscape.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

The proposals retain the historic shopfront sustaining the High Street's rhythm, and makes modest internal repairs, raises no highway, drainage or ecology concerns—there are no access changes and trip impacts are de minimis, drainage raises no objection, and the Ecological Impact Assessment confirms negligible bat roost potential with standard breeding-bird timing; the scheme is exempt from BNG given its de minimis nature on fully developed fabric.

However, these benefits are outweighed by clear policy conflict. First, the loss of the village shop unit has not been justified: there is no sustained marketing or alternatives testing to show the premises are no longer economically viable for retail/community use. This also undermines the Large Village role in CP1/CP2 and is inconsistent with the NPPF aim to support local services and reduce the need to travel. Second, while a rear conservatory is acceptable in principle, the roof-lantern creates a visually assertive form that is not subordinate to the listed building's rear elevation, contrary to WCS CP57, the Wiltshire Design Guide (SPD, 2024), and NPPF Section 12 on context-led, visually attractive design. Third, applying great weight to designated assets (NPPF Chapter 16), the rear design would cause less-than-substantial harm to the listed building and Conservation Area that is not clearly and convincingly justified, and putative public benefits cannot be relied upon while CP49 remains unmet; the scheme therefore also conflicts with WCS CP58. On balance, the proposal is not in accordance with the Development Plan when read as a whole, and there are no material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate otherwise. Refusal is therefore recommended.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Planning Permission be REFUSED.

1. Insufficient evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the premises are no longer viable for their existing or any reasonable community use, or that all reasonable options to retain such a use have been exhausted. The proposal fails to provide any evidence in respect of marketing for sale or rent on reasonable terms that would take into account the condition/status of the build and market conditions. The proposal is therefore contrary to Core Policy 49 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. The unjustified loss of a community facility within a Large Village would undermine the settlement's role in meeting local needs and reducing the need to travel, contrary to Core Policies 1 and 2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework objectives to support local services and sustainable travel patterns.

3. The proposal would cause less-than-substantial harm to the significance of the listed building and the Ramsbury Conservation Area through the rear design's visual impact. Further harm is caused to the listed building through loss of the continued use as a shop which is an integral part of the value and significance of the listed building. The harm has not been clearly and convincingly justified and there are no public benefits which outweigh the harm. The development is therefore contrary to Core Policy 58 and National Planning Policy Framework heritage policies, which require great weight to be given to an asset's conservation and any harm to be justified and outweighed by public benefits.