

APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT OFFICER DELGATED REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2025/10003
APPLICATION TYPE:	Listed building consent (Alt/Ext)
SITE ADDRESS:	1 High Street, Ramsbury, Marlborough, SN8 2PA
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	Change of use of former retail space to part of existing dwellinghouse, replacement rear extension and internal alterations
RECOMMENDATION:	Refuse

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.

The list entry, for means of identification purposes only, provides the following description:

*Listed 22.8.66 Grade II Listed Building, List Entry **1034088**. SU 27 SE RAMSBURY HIGH STREET (south side), 10/193 No 1, House. c1820-40. Diaper brickwork with slate roof. 2-storey, 3 bays with a later addition on the left containing a shop. 4-panelled door in centre bay with reeded doorcase and simple bracketed canopy. 16- pane sashes with wide moulded boxes. Brick dentilled eaves. 4-flue stack between bays 2 and 3, where a blocked window is on the elevation. Listing NGR: SU2754071555*

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-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.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
PL/2025/09823 – Change of use of former retail space to part of existing dwellinghouse, replacement rear extension and internal alterations. Recommended Refusal
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

Legislation

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 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.

National Policy and Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out government policy, including 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 213-215 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 to 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.

Section 14 of the NPPF addresses the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change.

Paragraph 167 advises that “Local planning authorities should also give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic (including through installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights).

National Planning Practice Guidance provides guidance on interpreting the NPPF.

Historic England Advice Note 2: Making changes to Heritage Assets, illustrates the application of policies set out in the NPPF in determining applications for LBC (and planning permission).

Historic England’s publication ‘Traditional Windows – Their Care, Repair and Upgrading (2017)’ encourages the retention of windows that contribute to the significance of listed buildings but sets also out their approach to the alteration/replacement of windows where this is acceptable in principle.

Historic England Advice Note 18: Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency, provides advice in support of consistent decision making on approaches to improve the energy efficiency and support carbon reduction of historic buildings, whilst conserving their significance.

Wiltshire Core Strategy:

Whilst not directly relevant to listed building consent applications, the below policies give an indication of the Council’s approach to development affecting heritage assets:

- Core Policy 57 ‘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.
- Core Policy 58 ‘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.”

ISSUES

Impact upon the preservation of the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural and/or historic interest.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Parish/Town Council: Support

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 in a conspicuous part of the High Street and conservation area.

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

REPRESENTATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of Section 5(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990 (as amended) the application for listed building consent was publicised by way of:

- A site notice displayed near the site.
- An advertisement placed in the local press.

These methods were used to inform interested parties and to allow a statutory consultation period of **21 days** for representations to be submitted.

No representations were received in response to this application.

ASSESSMENT

In accordance with Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, special regard has been given to the significance of the listed building, including its architectural and historic interest, and the desirability of preserving both the building and its setting. Relevant policies within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly Section 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, have also been taken into account. These policies require that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset must be clearly justified and weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

In order to be acceptable, the application needs to be assessed against the following criteria:

Information considered/submitted

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.

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.

Assessment of significance:

According to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), significance is defined 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 further categorises significance into four key values:

- *Evidential* – the potential of the asset to yield evidence about past human activity.
- *Historic* – the ways in which the asset illustrates aspects of history.
- *Aesthetic* – the sensory and design qualities of the asset.

- *Communal* – the meanings and associations attached to the asset by people.

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.

Impact of proposals on the significance and setting of the building/structure:

Understanding the impact of proposed works on a listed building requires a careful and proportionate assessment of how those changes affect the asset’s heritage significance and its setting. This includes both the physical alterations to the building itself and any changes to its spatial or visual relationship with surrounding structures or spaces.

The significance of a heritage asset is not static; it is shaped by its architectural, historic, and communal values, and by how these are experienced in context. Therefore, any intervention must be considered in light of the asset’s identified significance, with attention given to both potential harm and benefits. Benefits may include repairs that support the long-term conservation of the building, improved energy performance, or enhanced public access and understanding.

This assessment is grounded in the statutory duty under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving the building and its features of special interest. It is also informed by national policy, particularly paragraphs 199–208 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and relevant local heritage policies and guidance.

The proposed works would have some beneficial effect on the significance of the Grade II listed building, with limited areas of less-than-substantial significance that remain unjustified. The reopening of a historic doorway, and the insertion of a single new first-floor opening will affect only low-significance later fabric and will not diminish the building’s evidential, historic, aesthetic, as no changes are proposed to the principal façade, ensuring the preserved visual contribution of the diaper brickwork, sash windows, and characteristic High Street frontage.

The identified harm from the replacement rear conservatory, where the modern existing structure—of no heritage merit—would be removed and replaced with a new extension. While the removal of the existing conservatory is inherently positive, allowing original brick corbelling

and historic rear relationships to be better revealed, the design of the replacement requires refinement: in its current form, the proposed roof lantern introduces an element of visual prominence that risks competing with the simplicity and subordination expected of rear additions in the Wiltshire Design Guide (SPD, 2024). However, this limited harm is low-level, reversible, and capable of mitigation through minor design amendments to ensure the extension remains recessive beneath first-floor window cills and preserves the legibility of the rear elevation.

Essential repairs to the former shop area would address water ingress, damp and structural deterioration, thereby improving the building's long-term viability in line with Sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and NPPF Chapter 16, which require great weight to be given to conservation and support securing viable uses. When assessed against WCS CP57 and CP58, the works preserve the High Street frontage, sustain the shopfront's aesthetic and communal contribution, and deliver meaningful heritage enhancement through repair and improved legibility.

The loss of the former shop unit to wholly residential use results in harm to the building's historic and communal significance, because it removes an established community-serving function that has contributed to the mixed-use character and collective memory of Ramsbury High Street (most recently as the community charity shop until January 2024). In policy terms, this engages WCS Core Policy 49, which requires robust, sustained marketing and alternatives testing to demonstrate that the premises are no longer economically viable for retail/community use; in this case, that evidential threshold has not been met, so the LPA cannot conclude that reasonable prospects for continued community/retail occupation have been exhausted. As a heritage impact, the change diminishes the asset's communal value (loss of day-to-day function) and historic value (weakening the illustrative role the building has long played in the High Street's mixed-use pattern), even though the shopfront is retained and the High Street elevation remains visually unaltered—mitigation that helps to preserve aesthetic legibility but does not substitute for the building's social function.

Though largely dealt with under the parallel planning application, the LPA has regard for the intended use of the listed building. The proposed listed building works are only necessary to facilitate this change of use and so at this time are entirely unjustified.

Applying Sections 16/66/72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and NPPF Chapter 16, great weight must be given to conservation and any harm must be supported by clear and convincing justification and, where relevant, outweighed by public benefits; because CP49's evidential requirements are unmet, claimed benefits (fabric repairs, sensitive integration, retention of the shopfront) cannot be relied upon to outweigh the less-than-substantial harm arising from the unjustified loss of the shop use and loss of fabric.

Other matters

Impact on Ecology

While Sections 16 and 74(3) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 do not explicitly reference protected species, Local Planning Authorities have a statutory duty to consider potential impacts on protected species when determining applications. This responsibility arises from broader environmental legislation and national planning policy, and must be taken into account where relevant.

		Y / N / NA
(a)	Does the site or proposed development possess/impact on any of the features where protected species are likely to be present (assessed against Natural England's standing advice) and where species are likely to be found?	Y
(b)	If yes, has a protected species survey been submitted?	Y
(c)	If yes, does the survey show a detailed consideration of ecological impacts, wildlife mitigation and the creation, restoration and enhancement of wildlife corridors to preserve and enhance biodiversity in accordance with the standing advice?	Y

Comments (if any): The ecological assessment confirms the development will have no significant ecological impact, as the building shows no evidence of roosting bats, contains no suitable bat-roosting features, and comprises only hard surfaces and existing built fabric with no priority habitats affected. The only ecological consideration relates to nesting birds, with works advised to avoid the March–August breeding season or ensure birds are excluded beforehand. As such, the proposal results in no harm to protected species, triggers no requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain, and is considered fully compliant with Core Policy 50 and relevant NPPF ecology safeguards. Overall, the scheme indicated ecologically neutral.

CONCLUSION

In this case, the proposals will result in harm to the building via the unjustified loss of the historic shop use, which diminishes its communal and historic significance, and through the design of the replacement rear conservatory, which introduces visual prominence inconsistent with the subordination expected of extensions to listed buildings. Although the works involve only part of the building and therefore constitute less than substantial harm for the purposes of the NPPF, this impact includes the loss of a long-standing community-serving function and a visually intrusive rear addition, and should not be regarded as being of lesser consequence. Indeed, the wording of the NPPF—and the statutory duty under Sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990—requires that any degree of harm to a designated heritage asset be taken seriously, and that clear and convincing justification be provided.

Paragraph 215 of the NPPF allows such harm to be offset by public benefits, including heritage or conservation benefits. However, in this case, insufficient objective justification has been provided. The loss of the shop unit has not been supported by CP49-compliant evidence, such as sustained marketing or alternatives testing, and therefore the authority cannot conclude that continued community/retail use is unviabl. Likewise, while some conservation benefits are cited—such as repairs and the retention of the shopfront—these cannot be relied upon to outweigh the harm, particularly where the claimed benefits depend on a change of use that has not been justified.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Listed Building Consent be REFUSED for the following reasons:

1. The proposed rear extension (replacement conservatory) by reason of its roof lantern and resulting bulk would read as a visually assertive and insensitive form that is viewed as an incongruous addition to listed building's rear elevation, thereby causing less-than-substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II listed building and the Ramsbury Conservation Area. Great weight must be given to the asset's conservation and any harm requires clear and convincing justification; none has been provided. The claimed public/heritage benefits cannot be relied upon to outweigh the harm while the loss of the shop use remains unjustified as the optimum viable use of the building. The proposal therefore fails the statutory tests in Sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, conflicts with NPPF Section 16, and is contrary to Core Policy 58 (Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment) and Core Policy 57 (Ensuring high quality design and place shaping) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, as amplified by the Wiltshire Design Guide (SPD, 2024).