

APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION

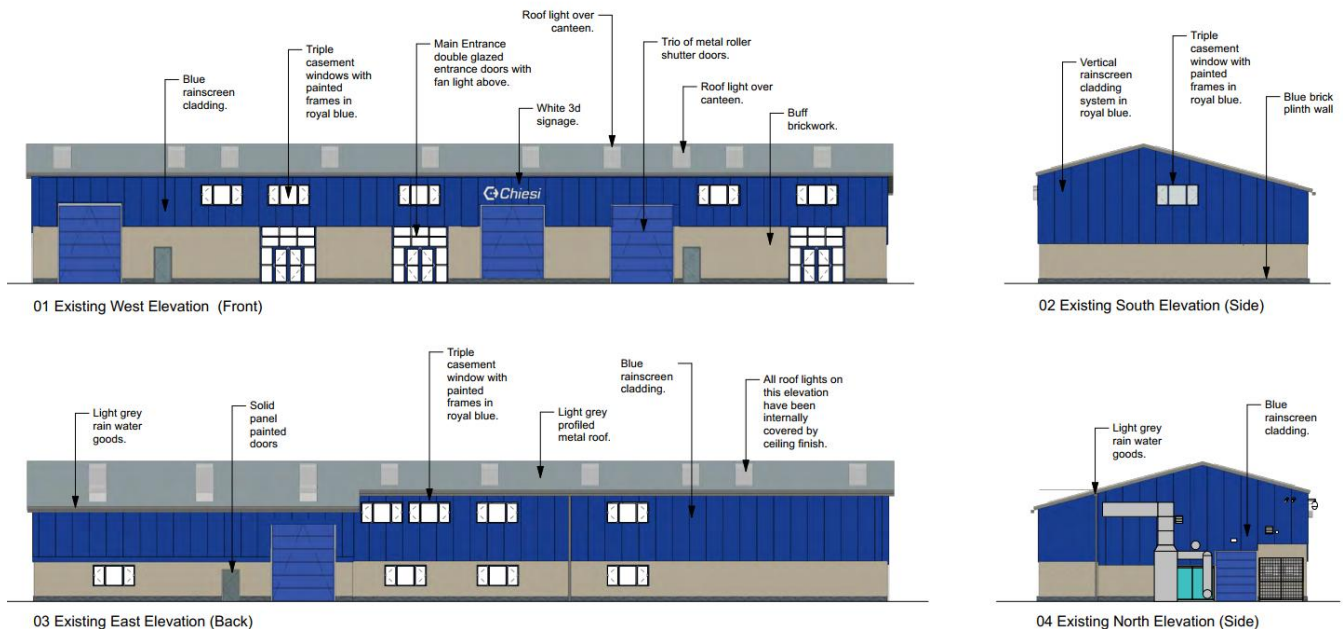
CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/00009
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Units 1 To 3, Bath Road Industrial Estate, Chippenham, SN14 0AB
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Full Height Rainscreen Cladding System to the South and West Elevations Incorporating a Green Living Wall to the Principal Elevation. A Full Series of Pitched Solar Panels Over Roof, Save for Areas Occupied by Functioning Rooflights.
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve with Conditions

PROPOSAL

The application seeks planning permission to apply new cladding to the south and west elevation of the building. The submitted Design and Access Statement (DAS) advises that the existing cladding is no longer fit for purpose, with the buff brickwork to the ground floor walls being exposed to driving rain and susceptible to internal damp and water ingress.

The existing elevations are as shown on the submitted plans, below:

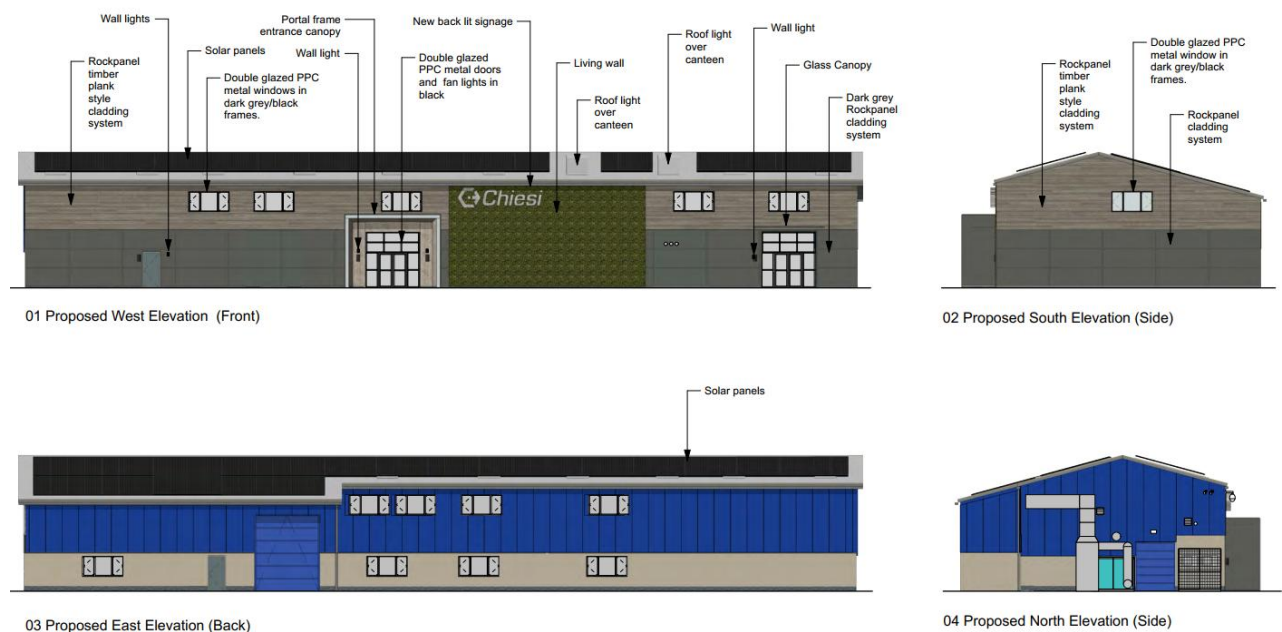


The proposal is to replace the cladding on the south and west elevations with a ventilated rainscreen cladding *“forming a protective, ventilated outer skin separated from the structural backing wall”*. The DAS advises that the proposed cladding system will provide:

- Robust protection against the local UK climate — high rainfall, wind-driven rain, and seasonal temperature swings.

- Improved thermal performance and energy efficiency by providing greater protection against extreme weather conditions, enabling compliance with current energy-use regulations for non-domestic buildings.
- Reduced risk of moisture ingress, condensation, and structural degradation over the building's design life.
- A clean, modern, industrial-appropriate appearance, while offering flexibility for future maintenance or modification
- Compliance with all relevant UK regulatory requirements (structural, fire safety, moisture control, and thermal performance).
- A non-combustible or limited-combustibility, in accordance with UK fire regulations and guidance (e.g. outer faces to meet necessary fire-spread and reaction-to-fire requirements).

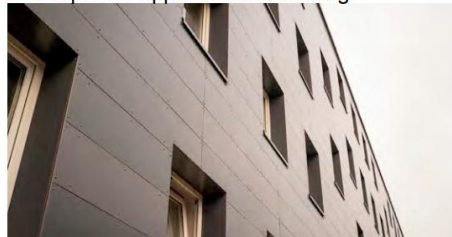
Extracts of the proposed elevations are shown below:



The following images have been provided within the DAS showing the type of cladding and an example of the living wall proposed on the west elevation:



01 Proposed Upper Floor- Cladding



02 Proposed Lower Floor- Cladding



03 Proposed Living Wall

The application also proposes an array of PV panels – they would each measure 1135mm x 1762mm and would be slim profile at 31mm thick. They would be mounted on a short frame fixing rail, c48mm high. The PV panels would be over those parts of the roof where there are not existing rooflights.

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The site is Units 1-3 Bath Road Industrial Estate. As suggested by the name the area is characterised by large warehouses and industrial units with parking and access roads. To the east of the site is the railway line. To the north, west and south are other industrial buildings. The images below show an extract of the submitted location plan, and an aerial photograph of the site.



The images below show the west and south elevations of the building:





The site is not subject to any ecological, historical or landscape designations. It is in Flood Zone 1 but is within an area identified at risk of surface water flooding.

PLANNING HISTORY

None that is relevant to this application.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

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 3 Infrastructure Requirements;
- Core Policy 10 Chippenham Community Area
- Core Policy 34 Additional Employment Land
- Core Policy 35 Existing Employment Land

- Core Policy 41 Sustainable Construction and Low-Carbon Energy;
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;

Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan

- Policy SCC2 - Sustainable Design and Construction

Supplementary Planning Documents and other Guidance:

- Wiltshire Design Guide (adopted April 2024)

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 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 site can be adequately drained without increasing flood risk elsewhere (CP 67)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Chippenham Town Council: Support:

“The Town Council welcomes the proposed installation of solar panels and a living wall. A condition should be attached to any consent requiring submission of a management plan for the living wall to ensure that it remains healthy and attractive in the long term.”

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;

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

No representations had been received at the time of writing.

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.

Assessment and Conclusion

The application site lies within the defined development boundary of Chippenham, which is identified as a Principal Settlement under Core Policy 1 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy. Principal Settlements are the primary focus for growth and investment, where sustainable development is supported in principle.

The proposal does not seek to change the use of the site, nor does it involve the expansion of the employment area. Rather, it relates to external alterations to an existing industrial building within an established employment estate. The works are intended to improve the building's weather resistance, thermal performance, sustainability and long-term durability, thereby supporting its continued viable use.

Core Policy 35 seeks to support the retention and enhancement of existing employment land and premises. In this context, the proposed upgrading of the building envelope represents reinvestment in existing employment infrastructure, which aligns with the objectives of maintaining and strengthening the local employment base, whilst Core Policy 41's objectives to support sustainable construction

Given that the development is located within the settlement boundary, relates to an existing lawful employment use, and does not give rise to conflict with the strategic distribution of development set out in Core Policies 1 and 2, the proposal is considered acceptable in principle.

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.

WCS Core Policy 41 encourages retrofitting measures to improve the energy performance of existing buildings

Assessment

The application relates to an existing industrial building within the Bath Road Industrial Estate. The surrounding area is characterised by large warehouse and industrial units, functional in appearance, with expansive areas of hardstanding, servicing yards and parking. The architectural language across the estate is utilitarian, with limited decorative detailing and a focus on operational practicality.

The proposal seeks to replace existing cladding on the south and west elevations with a ventilated rainscreen cladding system. The submitted information explains that the current fabric is no longer performing adequately, with exposure to driving rain resulting in damp and water ingress. The proposed system would provide enhanced weather protection, improved thermal efficiency and long-term durability.

In design terms, the introduction of modern rainscreen cladding is consistent with the prevailing character of the industrial estate. Contemporary cladding systems are common within such employment areas and are typically expressed in clean, simple planes with durable, low-maintenance finishes. The proposal would result in a more cohesive and refreshed external appearance when compared to the existing weathered brick and cladding elements.

The inclusion of a living wall on the west elevation represents a modest visual enhancement. While not characteristic of traditional industrial architecture, it would introduce vertical greening within an otherwise hard-edged environment. Given the absence of landscape or heritage designations and the enclosed industrial context, this feature is considered a positive addition that would soften the appearance of the building without appearing incongruous.

The proposal does not result in changes to the building's footprint, height or massing. There would therefore be no material alteration to the spatial character of the estate. The works are limited to external treatment and would not detract from the established pattern of development.

In terms of sustainable construction, the upgraded cladding system would improve the building's thermal performance and resilience, aligning with the objectives of Core Policy 57 and Core Policy 41 in supporting energy efficiency and long-term building performance.

The Building for a Healthy Life Framework is primarily directed toward residential environments; however, the introduction of a living wall may contribute positively to visual amenity and employee wellbeing within the estate, albeit in a limited and site-specific manner.

Overall, while the proposal is not intended to transform the architectural character of the estate, it represents a functional and visually appropriate upgrade. It would maintain the industrial character of the area whilst improving the building's appearance and environmental performance.

The proposal also includes a roof-mounted array of photovoltaic (PV) panels on the south-facing sections of the roof where existing rooflights are not located. The panels are slim profile (31mm thick) and mounted on a short frame (c. 48mm high), resulting in minimal visual projection above the existing roof plane. The PV panels would not be prominently visible from public vantage points at ground level due to the roof height and industrial context.

The PV array is therefore considered compatible with the utilitarian character of the Bath Road Industrial Estate and would not harm the visual appearance of the building or surrounding area. The inclusion of renewable energy technology aligns with Core Policy 41 and Core Policy 57 objectives for sustainable construction and energy efficiency.

Conclusion

The proposed solar panels replacement cladding and living wall would be compatible with the established industrial character of the Bath Road Industrial Estate. The development would not harm the character or appearance of the surrounding area and would provide a modest visual and environmental enhancement.

The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Core Policies 41 and 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, Section 12 of the NPPF, and the principles of the Wiltshire Design Guide.

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.

These policies guide the assessment of amenity impacts, which will be considered in detail under the below headings.

Assessment

The application relates solely to the replacement of external cladding and the installation of a living wall on elevations of an existing industrial building and the provision of an array of PV panels. No extension to the building footprint, increase in height, or change of use is proposed.

The site is located within an established industrial estate, surrounded on all sides by other employment uses and the railway line to the east. There are no immediately adjoining residential properties that could reasonably be affected by the works.

Given that the proposal does not introduce additional plant, servicing arrangements, external lighting, openings, or operational changes, there would be no implications in respect of overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing, noise, disturbance, or overbearing impact. The visual changes are limited to material treatment and would not alter the relationship between this building and neighbouring units.

The installation of the living wall would not give rise to adverse amenity impacts. Subject to appropriate maintenance, it is more likely to provide a modest visual improvement within the industrial setting. The roof-mounted PV panels would be fixed in place and would not introduce additional height, openings, or operational changes to the building. Given the separation from neighbouring units and the industrial context of the estate, the panels would not result in overlooking, overshadowing, noise, glare, or other amenity impacts.

Overall, the development would have a neutral impact on neighbouring occupiers and would not prejudice the reasonable use or enjoyment of adjacent employment premises.

Conclusion

The proposed works would not result in any unacceptable impact upon the amenity of neighbouring occupants. The development therefore complies with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Policy Context

Core Policy 67 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that development does not increase flood risk elsewhere and is supported by appropriate surface water management.

Development should be located in areas at lowest risk of flooding and incorporate sustainable drainage measures where necessary.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) directs development to areas of lowest flood risk and requires that proposals do not increase flood risk on site or elsewhere.

Assessment

The site lies within Flood Zone 1, which is defined as land having a low probability of fluvial flooding. The site is, however, identified as being within an area susceptible to surface water flooding.

The proposal relates solely to the replacement of external cladding on the south and west elevations of an existing building, the provision of solar panels to the roof and the installation of a living wall. There is no alteration to the building footprint, no increase in hardstanding, and no changes to site levels or drainage infrastructure.

As the development does not increase impermeable surfaces or alter the means by which surface water is currently managed, it would not give rise to increased surface water runoff. The ventilated rainscreen cladding system would not materially affect the building's drainage characteristics, and the living wall element would not result in additional runoff beyond the existing situation.

Given the limited nature of the works, and the absence of changes to ground conditions or drainage arrangements, the proposal would not increase flood risk on site or elsewhere.

The PV panels are mounted on the roof and do not alter the building footprint or ground-level drainage. The proposal would therefore have no effect on surface water management or flood risk.

Conclusion

The development is located within Flood Zone 1 and would not alter the existing drainage regime or increase impermeable surfaces. It is therefore considered acceptable in flood risk terms and compliant with Core Policy 67 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The proposal relates to the replacement of external cladding and the installation of a living wall to an existing employment building within the settlement boundary of Chippenham. The development does not alter the use, footprint, height, or operational characteristics of the site. In principle, the proposal supports the continued viable use and upgrading of existing employment premises, aligning with the objectives of Core Policies 1, 2 and 35 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

In design terms, the introduction of modern rainscreen cladding is appropriate within the context of the established industrial estate and would result in a refreshed and cohesive appearance. The living wall would introduce a modest element of greening within an otherwise utilitarian setting and is considered a positive visual addition. The development would not result in harm to the character or appearance of the area and complies with Core Policy 57, the design objectives of the NPPF, and the Wiltshire Design Guide.

There would be no adverse impact upon neighbouring amenity, given the industrial context and the limited nature of the works. The proposal would not increase flood risk, as no additional impermeable surfaces or alterations to drainage arrangements are proposed.

Chippenham Town Council has requested that any permission be subject to a condition requiring the submission of a management plan for the living wall to ensure its long-term maintenance. Given that the living wall forms part of the scheme's visual enhancement and could, if left unmanaged, deteriorate and adversely affect the building's appearance, it is considered reasonable and necessary to secure its ongoing maintenance through condition. Such a requirement would ensure that the intended visual and environmental benefits are retained over time and would meet the tests set out in national policy for the use of planning conditions.

The inclusion of a roof-mounted PV array would enhance the building's energy performance and aligns with Core Policy 41's objectives to support sustainable construction. The panels are lightweight, slim profile, and would have minimal visual impact in the industrial context. Taken together with the cladding works and living wall, the development represents an appropriate, sustainable, and visually acceptable upgrade to the existing building.

The recommendation and planning balance remain unchanged: the proposal complies with relevant policies, would not harm amenity or the character of the area, and is considered acceptable.

Overall, the proposal accords with the development plan when read as a whole, and there are no material considerations that indicate that planning permission should be withheld.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Solar Panel Specifications received 23 January 2026

Structural Statement received 16 January 2026

Location Plan 2038-CMS-XX-XX--DR-A-PL01 received 13 January 2026

Existing and Proposed Sections A & B 2038-CMS-XX-XX-DR-A-PL15 received 2 January 2026

Proposed Site and Roof Plan 2038-CMS-XX-XX-DR-A-PL10 received 2 January 2026

Existing and Proposed Sections C & D 2038-CMS-XX-XX-DR-A-PL16 received 2 January 2026

Design Statement received 2 January 2026

Proposed Elevations 2038-CMS-XX-XX-DR-A-PL12 received 2 January 2026

Proposed Floor Plans 2038-CMS-XX-XX-DR-A-PL11 received 2 January 2026

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. The living wall installed on the building shall be maintained in a healthy and visually attractive condition for the lifetime of the development. Any plants that die, become diseased, or fail to thrive shall be replaced within the next planting season so that the living wall continues to provide a permanent visual enhancement.

REASON: To ensure that the living wall remains attractive and well-maintained over the long term, in accordance with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informative – Advertisement Consent

The plans indicate the provision of new backlit signage. The grant of planning permission does not authorise the display of any advertisements. Under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007, separate consent may be required for illuminated or external signage. The applicant is advised to contact the Local Planning Authority regarding the need for advertisement consent prior to installation.