

CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2026/00928
Application Type:	Listed building consent (Alt/Ext)
Consultation ends:	19 March 2026
Case officer:	Fiona Webb

Site Address:	53 Northgate Street, Devizes, SN10 1JJ
Proposal:	Proposed name sign to be fixed to the front railings.
Recommendation:	Approve with Conditions

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The property is a Grade II listed building located in Devizes Conservation Area. The property is dated 1822 and was the Literary and Scientific Institute. The site also affects the setting of neighbouring listed buildings.

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

Originally built as a school. Dated 1822. 3 storeyed narrow front set well back with forecourt. Upper floors faced in Bath stone cut as brick, ground floor and plinth ashlar. Shallow coved cornice and blocking course, canted out either end over fanned bracket projection. 2nd floor centred 2 light mullioned casement with 4 centred arches to lights and top panes. Splayed stone surround and small panelled spandrels. Drip mould over. Above a small panel with date. The 1st floor has similar window of 3 lights. Rectangular panel below with inscription: "British Schools". Full width drip mould over ground floor. 2 windows and central door set in similar surround to windows above with panelled spandrels. Larger 4 centred arched windows of 6 panes, sloping sills, recessed panels below. Plank door with ornate wrought iron hinges also under 4 centred arch. Curiosity value.

PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks to erect a name sign to be fixed to the front boundary railings.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
E/10/1097/FUL STATUS: Closed DECISION: Approve with Conditions DATED: 24 September 2010 – Erection of gates and railings to front of property.
E/10/1098/LBC STATUS: Closed DECISION: Approve with Conditions DATED: 24 September 2010 – Metal railings and gates to front boundary of property

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.

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).

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 on the listed building, impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings, impact on the conservation area.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Devizes Town Council: No objection.

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 have been received during the consultation period. In accordance with the provisions of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*, only matters relevant to the consideration of the building's special architectural or historic interest have been taken into account in the assessment of this Listed Building Consent 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.

In this case, the applications are accompanied by a "Design and Access Statement" which provides sufficient information to understand the impact of the proposals and is proportionate to their scope. The requirements of the NPPF are therefore met in this respect.

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.

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.

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.

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The proposed works involve the erection of a name sign to be fixed to the front railings on the boundary of the property.

The building is used as a social club although there is no evidence that this is the case and the sign is needed to assist with legibility and wayfinding.

As such it is proposed to erect a name sign measuring 500 x 250mm, manufactured from rust free metal. The proposed colour scheme of the sign is black background with white lettering.

The design approach is based on minimum intervention and reversibility. Whilst the railings are a modern feature, there would be no harm to their appearance or the setting of the listed building, the name sign would also be fully removable in the future.

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.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Listed Building Consent be GRANTED, subject to the following conditions:

1. WM13 – Approved Plans:

Location Plan – dated 18/2/2026

Elevations of Name Sign – dated 10/02/2026

Signage Elevations – dated 18/2/2026

2. WA5 – Time Limit - LBC Commence within 3 years
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Conditions

- 1 The works for which Listed Building Consent is hereby granted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 The works hereby granted consent shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents: Location Plan – dated 18/2/2026 Elevations of Name Sign – dated 10/02/2026 Signage Elevations – dated 18/2/2026 REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of the significance of the heritage assets and their setting.