

APPLICATION FOR FULL-PLANNING PERMISSION CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/00385
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Carpetright, Bath Road, Chippenham, SN14 0AT
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Change of Use from Class E (formerly A1 Retail) to Use Class B8 to create a self-storage facility; insertion of mezzanine for self-storage use (Use Class B8).
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve with Conditions

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The existing building the subject of this application is one of a cluster of large retail sheds; the subject building was formerly occupied by Carpetright (later Tapi), to the north-west is the large retail unit of B&Q and to the north-east is Currys. To the east and south the site is bound by mature landscaping which frames the mainline railway line. The site is accessed from Bath Road, with the access spur serving all of these retail units.

The site falls within the settlement boundary of Chippenham but does not fall within any landscape or heritage designation. The landscaping along the eastern boundary of the site is designated as a Priority Habitat and also forms part of a designated Green Corridor (Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan: c) Railway Line Corridor), but there are no Public Rights of Way crossing the site, which falls in flood zone 1 but is however shown to be at elevated risk of groundwater flooding.¹

PROPOSAL

The application seeks permission for the Change of Use of the building from Use Class E: Commercial, Business and Service (being formerly within Use Class A1: retail), to Use Class B8: Storage and Distribution, to allow the building to be used for self-storage.

The Description of Development was amended during the course of determination, following agreement from the Applicant. This was to allow for capture of the additional floorspace through insertion of mezzanine floorspace, which has been considered and consulted on through the related planning application PL/2026/00386. The information submitted in support of the planning application confirms that the additional floorspace proposed through the mezzanine level is 500sqm, this would add to the 603sqm floorspace already provided at ground floor level.² Although the Applicant subsequently suggested further floorspace was being considered through mezzanine space, the application has been consulted upon, assessed and determined on the basis of those submitted details – any further increase could potentially cross the threshold of scale into a ‘major’ application.

The Description of Development on this application has thus been amended as follows, from:

¹ Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2024

² As per Condition no.5 on N/05/03094 – see below

Change of Use from Class E (formerly A1 Retail) to Use Class B8 to create a self-storage facility.

to:

Change of Use from Class E (formerly A1 Retail) to Use Class B8 to create a self-storage facility; insertion of mezzanine for self-storage use (Use Class B8).

Related planning application PL/2026/00386 has been submitted as a Section73 'variation' application and seeks permission to remove Condition no.5 attached to the original planning permission for the building (under N/05/03094) which restricts the provision of any mezzanine floorspace, stating:

"The gross floorspace of the retail warehouse hereby permitted shall not exceed 603 square metres and there shall be at no time any additional floorspace created, whether by extension or internal alterations including the installation of mezzanine floors, unless approved in writing by the local planning authority."

On review of the PL/2026/00386 application submission it became apparent that any approval of that Section73 application would allow for an increase of A1 floorspace essentially without restriction, and would need to be considered and determined accordingly. However, with the amended Description of Development for this application, the need for PL/2026/00386 effectively becomes obsolete, although the consultation responses pursuant to that application, insofar as they are equally applicable to this application proposal, are cross-referenced in the relevant sections in this report below.

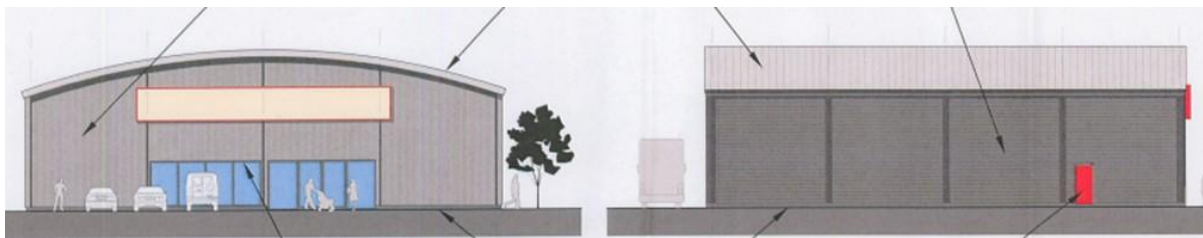
The facility will have approximately 80no. separate spaces ranging in size from 3sqm to 10sqm in self-contained, individually secured spaces, although the specific size of unit will be driven by demand. No external changes are proposed and similarly no changes to the apron or site land are proposed.

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
N/05/03094/FUL STATUS: Closed DECISION: Approve with Conditions DATED: 6 July 2006 – Non-Food Bulky Goods Retail Warehouse
N/04/01736/REM STATUS: Closed DECISION: Approved DATED: 9 August 2004 – VARIATION TO SITING OF GARDEN CENTRE
N/03/02875/REM STATUS: Closed DECISION: Approved DATED: 8 January 2004 – RETAIL WAREHOUSE, BUILDERS YARD, GARDEN CENTRE, A3 RESTAURANT. ASSOCIATED PARKING, SERVICING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Of the above applications, N/05/03094 is of most direct relevance, and at the time of determination of this application there remains a live application (PL/2026/00386) related to this one, as set out above.

For reference, the approved plan and elevation drawings under that application show a floor area of some 24.5m by 25.0 (GIA)(612sqm), with a height to eaves of some 6.2m, and (rounded) roof height to some 8.6m; extracts below:



RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Statutory Legislation:

- The Town and Country Planning Act 1990

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 Spatial Strategy for the Chippenham Community Area]
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Core Policy 52 Green Infrastructure;
- Core Policy 55 Air Quality;
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 60 Sustainable Transport;
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development;
- Core Policy 62 Development Impacts on the Transport Network;
- Core Policy 64 Demand Management
- Core Policy 67 Flood Risk;

North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 (Saved Policies) ('NWLP')

- NE14: Trees, Site Features and the Control of New Development
- NE18: Noise and Pollution

Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan 2023 to 2038 (Made: May 2024) ('CNP')

- Policy SCC1 – Net Zero Carbon Development
- Policy SCC2 – Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy GI4 – Green Corridors
- Policy T1 – Provision and Enhancement of Cycle Paths*
- Policy T2 – Access to the Bus Network*

* Only directly applicable for major applications

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
- Wiltshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
 - Active travel infrastructure design standards 2022
 - Active travel parking standards and design guide 2022
- LTN1/20 – Cycle Infrastructure Design (July 2020)
- Air Quality SPD (July 2023)
- Revised Wiltshire Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document, October 2016

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 proposal would have a negative effect upon highway safety, including if there is sufficient parking for the proposed development (CP 61 and 64)
- What planning obligations are required to make the development acceptable in planning terms?

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WC Highways: No objection subject to conditions and S106 contribution towards off-site cycle infrastructure

Chippenham Town Council: No objection

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:

- 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.

Below is a summary of the representations received during the consultation period. Only material planning considerations have been taken into account in the assessment of this application. Non-material issues, such as property values or private legal disputes, cannot be considered in the determination process.

1no. representation was received with regard to this application, this being an objection from Cycle Chippenham maintaining that the application should be supported by a Transport Assessment, that cycle parking should be provided, and that a contribution towards off-site cycle infrastructure is necessary.

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

In Wiltshire, the direction and scale of development are guided by the Settlement Strategy set out in Core Policy 1 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy. This policy establishes a clear hierarchy of settlements based on their size, range of services, and capacity to accommodate sustainable growth. The hierarchy prioritises **Principal Settlements** (of which Chippenham is one) as the primary focus for significant development due to their strategic role in providing employment, infrastructure, and services.

Core Policy 2 (Delivery Strategy) complements this approach by directing development to the most sustainable locations, primarily within the defined Limits of Development of Principal Settlements, along with other designated settlements. 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 proposal is within the Limits of Development and is therefore considered to be in accordance with Core Policies 1 and 2 and acceptable in principle, subject to compliance with other relevant policies and material considerations.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) also requires that development proposals are sustainable in locational terms, with suitable access to services, facilities, and transport options. Proposals should contribute to the creation of well-connected, resilient communities and avoid isolated or unsustainable patterns of development.

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.

Assessment and Conclusion

In this case, the application relates to the Change of Use of an existing building and internal mezzanine, no external alterations are proposed. As such there is not considered to be any conflict with Core Policy 57 (WCS) arising.

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.

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 Highway Officer has confirmed that for this application the level of information submitted is adequate and appropriate in order to assess acceptability, and in particular that no Transport Statement is required to support the application. This conclusion rests on the satisfaction of the Highway Officer that the development will 'not produce a significant flow of highway traffic'.

The submitted application details confirm a mezzanine level of 500sqm floorspace, which would be in addition to the 603sqm provided at ground floor level – the application has been consulted upon on the basis of these details (as set out above). A Condition limiting the building to this extent of floorspace is considered necessary and appropriate because it is what has been consulted upon and a materially larger floorspace could have different planning impacts through private vehicular movements and the need to support modal shift through cycling and/or bus infrastructure.

In terms of sustainable transport, the Highway Officer has recommended a condition relating to the provision of cycle storage. Consideration of the comments made by the Highways Officer and Cycle Chippenham regarding contribution to the local cycle network and infrastructure is set out below.

Conclusion

With the recommended condition regarding provision of cycle storage at the site, and the confirmation from the Highway Officer regarding no objection in terms of highway impact, the application does not conflict with Core Policies 60, 61 and 62 (WCS) and Section 9 of the NPPF.

Environmental Considerations (Noise, Air Quality, Contaminated Land, etc.)

Policy Context

Core Policies 55 and 56 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy require:

- Development proposals to avoid unacceptable environmental impacts.
- To provide appropriate mitigation where risks are identified.

The NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) reinforce this by stating that proposals should:

- Prevent development that contributes to or is exposed to unacceptable pollution.
- Ensure developer responsibility for safe development on contaminated land.

Wiltshire Council's Air Quality SPD (2023) provides detailed guidance, especially near Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and encourages mitigation such as:

- EV charging infrastructure
- Green buffers
- Sustainable transport options

Assessment and Conclusion

There are not considered to be any specific noise, air quality or contaminated land issues arising from the proposal. The Public Protection Officer has confirmed that given the context and commercial nature of the site and its setting, and in particular the lack of any dwellings within the vicinity, there is no specific need or requirement to restrict the opening hours by way of Condition.

Other Issues

Given the location of the site, there are not considered to be any **amenity, heritage or landscape** impacts arising from the proposed development. In terms of **ecological impacts**, although the site is adjacent to a Priority Habitat, given that the proposal is for the Change of Use of an existing building, with no external works being proposed, there are not considered to be any material ecology impacts arising. **BNG** is not applicable given the application is for a change of use only. On the basis that the proposal is for the Change of Use and internal works of an existing building, where the proposed use does not introduce a more vulnerable use onto the site, there are not considered to be any **flood risk or drainage** issues arising.

CIL & S106 CONTRIBUTIONS

CIL

This is a charge that local authorities can impose on new developments in their area. The money generated through the levy will contribute towards the funding of infrastructure to support growth and is payable upon commencement of development. Although the site would fall under CIL charging zone 1, for B8 uses the sum equates to £0 per square metre of floor space created.

S106 CONTRIBUTIONS

Core Policy 3 advises that *‘All new development will be required to provide for the necessary on-site and, where appropriate, off-site infrastructure requirements arising from the proposal. Infrastructure requirements will be delivered directly by the developer and/or through an appropriate financial contribution prior to, or in conjunction with, new development.’* This Policy is in line with the tests set under Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010, and Paragraph 58 of the National Planning Policy Framework. These are:

- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
- Directly related to the development; and
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development

Highways

NPPF paragraph 109 (f) supports the provision of suitable infrastructure. Sustainable transport measures are also listed at infrastructure priority theme 1 under Core Policy 3 of the adopted WCS. Core Policy 60 and 61 of the WCS encourage the sustainable, safe and efficient movement of people and goods. The Wiltshire Local Transport Plan contains a number of policies to support active travel, including:

- Policy SO2 (to provide, support and promote a choice of sustainable transport alternatives);
- SO13 (to reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car) and,

- SO14 (to promote travel modes that are beneficial to health) of the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 3.

The supporting text to Policy T1 within the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan at paragraph 9.14 sets out that new development places additional pressure and demand on the existing cycle network. Therefore, developer contributions will be sought for high priority improvements to the cycle network where a major development is proposed. The policy itself considers financial contributions in the context of major development.

The Revised Wiltshire Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document, October 2016 sets out that development generating significant trips will have an off-site impact. Mitigating measures might include planning obligations to facilitate modal shift, such as improvements to cycle infrastructure. However, mitigation in the form of conditions is the preference. Furthermore, planning obligations may be sought regardless of the size of the development proposed, depending on the site related circumstances. However, developments not requiring a transport assessment are unlikely to need to provide off-site works. Smaller developments will help reduce their limited impacts through the use of CIL receipts.

In this case, which is for a change of use and insertion of mezzanine level only, the scale and nature of the development compared to the existing is not considered to merit a transport assessment. This is not a major development. This indicates an obligation is unlikely to be reasonable. Moreover, it is important that this is not a new development and the new use, over the existing lawful use does not demonstrably indicate that transport harm would occur. As such, no mitigation is necessary. Whilst it is noted that CIL is zero rated for this type of use, that is justified because of issues of viability.

The Council's Highways Officer has stated that a contribution towards off-site cycle infrastructure is necessary. Part of the justification for this request is a similar scale of contribution having been requested of a recent scheme along the Bath Road for a B8 storage facility. However, in that instance, the proposal was for the erection of a new building, in an area where the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan (Figure 9.1: Required Route Improvements to Chippenham Cycle Network) shows sections of '*Improvement Schemes*' being required in the immediate vicinity. Conversely, this application proposal is for the Change of Use of an existing building and insertion of mezzanine, and there are no identified '*Improvement Schemes*' or '*High Priority Improvement Schemes*' within the immediate vicinity of the site, with the section of Bath Road in this locality being: '*Existing segregated cycle infrastructure*'.

There is a maxim in planning that each case should be assessed on its own individual merits. Given the policy context and the material differences between the two applications, it is not considered to be an evidentially robust position that contributions towards off-site cycling infrastructure is, in this instance, either **necessary** to make the development acceptable, or **directly related** to the development proposed.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

At the heart of the NPPF there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development requiring local planning authorities to approve development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; and where there are no relevant development plan policies,

or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless (taken from paragraph 11d of the NPPF):

- The application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing development proposed; or
- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole;

The principle of development is considered acceptable when assessed against the settlement strategy of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan.

The proposal is broadly compliant with relevant local and national planning policies in respect of design and scale (as an existing building) and highway safety. The proposal does not give rise to any residential amenity, heritage, landscape, flood risk / drainage or ecology / biodiversity issues or impacts.

The development would deliver clear benefits, including ensuring that this currently dis-used building is brought back into active use, which weighs positively in the overall planning balance.

No material considerations have been identified that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh these benefits or indicate that permission should be refused, having regard to the assessment above.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered acceptable in planning terms and in accordance with the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the National Planning Policy Framework, and all other relevant material considerations and is recommended for approval accordingly.

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:
 - Planning Portal (Produced: 20-Jan-2026): Location Plan
 - EMAPSITE PLANS: Site Plan(all received 20/01/2026 unless otherwise specified)

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

3. No building or use here permitted shall be occupied, or the use commence, until secure cycle parking to LTN 1/20 standard are provided, as well as provision of shower / changing facilities and lockers to store cycle equipment, to encourage staff cycle options. Such facilities are to be completed and kept free of obstruction and available for the parking of cycles only for the lifetime of the development.

REASON: To ensure the provision and availability of adequate and accessible cycle parking and associated showering/changing/storage facilities for commercial uses.

4. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking or re- enacting or amending that Order with or without modification), the site shall be used solely for purposes within Class(es) B8: Storage and Distribution of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended)(or in any provisions equivalent to that class in any statutory instrument revoking or re- enacting that Order with or without modification).

REASON: The proposed use is acceptable but the Local Planning Authority wish to consider any future proposal for a change of use, other than a use within the same class(es), having regard to the circumstances of the case.

5. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking or re- enacting or amending that Order with or without modification), there shall be no additions / extensions / external alterations to any building forming part of the development hereby permitted.

REASON: In the interests of the amenity of the area and highway impacts, and to enable the Local Planning Authority to consider individually whether planning permission should be granted for additions/extensions or external alterations.

6. The gross internal floorspace of the retail warehouse hereby permitted shall not exceed 1103 square metres and there shall be at no time any additional floorspace created.

REASON: To protect the viability and vitality of the Town Centre and to ensure appropriate levels of traffic and vehicle movements relating to the site.

7. The proposed additional mezzanine floorspace shall only be first brought into use concurrently with (or after) the proposed change of use of the site for Class B8: Storage and Distribution of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended)(or in any provisions equivalent to that class in any statutory instrument revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification). Consistent with condition 4 it shall not be used for any purposes other than B8.

REASON: To protect the viability and vitality of the Town Centre and to ensure appropriate levels of traffic and vehicle movements relating to the site.

INFORMATIVES

The applicant is requested to note that this permission does not affect any private property rights and therefore does not authorise the carrying out of any work on land outside their control. If such works are required it will be necessary for the applicant to obtain the landowners consent before such works commence.

If you intend carrying out works in the vicinity of the site boundary, you are also advised that it may be expedient to seek your own advice with regard to the requirements of the Party Wall Act 1996.

The applicant should note that the grant of planning permission does not include any separate permission which may be needed to erect a structure in the vicinity of a public sewer. Such permission should be sought direct from Thames Water Utilities Ltd / Wessex Water Services Ltd. Buildings are not normally allowed within 3.0 metres of a Public Sewer although this may vary depending on the size, depth, strategic importance, available access and the ground conditions appertaining to the sewer in question.

Any alterations to the approved plans, brought about by compliance with Building Regulations or any other reason must first be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority before commencement of work.

This permission does not permit the display of any advertisements which require consent under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations, 2007 or under any Regulation revoking and re-enacting or amending those Regulations, including any such advertisements shown on the submitted plans.