

APPLICATION FOR FULL-PLANNING PERMISSION CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/01290
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	McDonalds, Bath Road, Chippenham, SN14 0AF
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Refurbishment of the shopfront to include the redecoration of the windows, door frames, fascias and cladding. The formation of a new access door with replacement glazing and associated works.
RECOMMENDATION:	That Planning Permission is GRANTED subject to conditions.

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The application site is within a purpose-built fast-food retail site which is typified by a tall, single storey building set central to the site with the drive-through element commencing in the northeastern corner and continuing clockwise around the building. A customer car park is on the northern side of the site.

The site is located on the north-eastern corner of a large highway roundabout and shares its access from the roundabout with the entrance to a large food retail outlet. It is typical of this type of outlet in terms of its overall appearance and location adjacent to main highways at edge-of town locations.

According to the Environmental Agency's flood mapping data, the site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is at negligible risk of surface water flooding. According to the SFRA, the site partially lies within a zone identified to be at risk of groundwater flooding to surface and subsurface assets. The building lies partially within this zone, however also lies within an area identified to be at negligible risk from groundwater flooding.

The site lies within the settlement boundary of Chippenham.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks full planning permission for the refurbishment of the shopfront to include the redecoration of the windows, door frames, fascias and cladding. The formation of a new access door (not for vehicle use) with replacement glazing and associated works.

The submitted plans also provide proposed internal alterations which would utilise the existing indoor customers' seating area to accommodate a separated entrance and indoor area for food deliveries.

There are no proposed works to the existing car parking, access or turning circle arrangements on-site.

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
N/99/01116/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Unknown Date: 4/8/1999 – FREESTANDING BANKING KIOSK
N/01/02669/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 6/2/2002 – EXTENSION TO RESTAURANT AND NEW PITCHED ROOF
N/93/00541/OUT - Outline Planning Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 12/7/1993 – DEVELOPMENT OF FREESTANDING RESTAURANT WITH DRIVE THRU FACILITY AND ASSOCIATED CAR PARKING DRIVE THRU RESTAURANT/CAR PARK
N/93/01504/REM - Reserved Matters Decision - Refused Date: 4/10/1993 – DETAILS OF FREESTANDING RESTAURANT WITH DRIVE THRU FACILITY AND ASSOCIATED CAR PARKING DRIVE THRU RESTAURANT/PARKING
N/93/01505/REM - Reserved Matters Decision - Refused Date: 4/10/1993 – DETAILS OF FREESTANDING RESTAURANT WITH DRIVE THRU FACILITY AND ASSOCIATED PARKING DRIVE THRU RESTAURANT/PARKING
N/94/00395/REM - Reserved Matters Decision - Approved Date: 28/3/1994 – DEVELOPMENT OF FREESTANDING RESTAURANT WITH DRIVE THRU FACILITY AND ASSOCIATED CAR PARKING DRIVE THRU RESTAURANT
N/95/00309/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approved Date: 23/3/1995 – PROPOSED ENTRANCE PORCH/DRAUGHT LOBBY ENTRANCE PORCH/DRAUGHT LOBBY
N/11/00133/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 7/3/2011 – Alterations to External Appearance and Layout of Restaurant. Replacement and New Signage.
14/03212/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 5/6/2014 – Reconfiguration Of Drive Thru Lane To Provide A Side-By-Side Order Point With The Construction Of A New Island For Signage. Existing Corral To Be Demolished, With The Construction Of New Remote Corral And Dry Store. The Installation Of A Goal Post Height Restrictor And 2 No Customer Order Displays.
17/05658/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 1/8/2017 – Refurbishment of the Restaurant with Alterations to Elevations to Include New Sliding Entrance Doors, Walnut Effect Trespa Cladding to Elevations and the Redecoration of the Window Frames with Associated Works to the Site. New Pedestrian Access to be Formed to the Remote Patio Area with 1 no. Grill Bay to be Removed.
18/02103/FUL – Full planning permission Decision – Approve with Conditions Date: 26/4/2018 – Relocation of approved remote patio area under 17/05658/FUL, to include new furniture and associated barriers.
18/01624/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 12/4/2018 – Installation of an ANPR camera

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 Spatial Strategy Chippenham Community Area
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;

Draft Wiltshire Local Plan Policies

The examination of the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan has been paused and the weight to be afforded to any part of the emerging plan can be no more than very limited. A decision on how to proceed shall be made by the Council in May (2026).

Neighbourhood Plan:

Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2038 ('made' in May 2024)

- Policy GI1 – Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity

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 there would be any harmful impacts upon protected species or priority habitats (CP 50)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WC Highways: No objection

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:

- Neighbour notification letters sent to adjoining and nearby properties;
- A site notice displayed near the site;
- An advertisement placed in the local press.

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

No comments were 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, CP2 and CP10 ensure that new development is strategically located, sustainable, and supports the character and function of Wiltshire's communities.

Assessment and Conclusion

The principle of alterations within existing buildings is considered acceptable, providing those proposals are compliant with the requirements of relevant policies within the development plan.

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 proposal comprises the redecoration of the existing fast food restaurant and internal refurbishment to facilitate the creation of a separate food delivery area. The proposed works would not alter the overall form, scale, height, or footprint of the existing building. Instead, the changes are limited to alterations to the colour of the existing aluminium panel fascia, the colour of the existing window frames, the introduction of opaque glazing to some windows, and the installation of an external glazed door to provide access to the newly separated delivery area within the existing building.

The existing building currently features dark green painted boarded fascia and window frames, which are proposed to be repainted in grey. Elements of the building already incorporate grey-painted boards and, as such, while the change in colour would result in a degree of visual alteration, it is not considered that the proposal would cause harm to the character or appearance of the existing building.

Furthermore, the remaining proposed works are not considered to result in any adverse impact on the character and appearance of the existing building or the wider area.

Conclusion

Having regard to the above, the proposal complies with the design principles set out in Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

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, with particular regard to loss of light, noise, loss of privacy, and overbearing effects.

Assessment

Given the nature of the proposal and the distance of approximately 65 metres to the closest residential property to the north, it is considered that there would be no harm in terms of overlooking, overbearing, overshadowing effects, and noise as a result of the proposal.

Conclusion

The proposal is therefore in accordance with point vii of Core Policy 57 of the WCS.

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.

Policy GI1 of the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan (CNP) further supports the above.

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 proposal is considered to fall within the di minimis exemption from the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements. Nevertheless, as required by the regulations, any approval must include an Informative reminding the applicants of the biodiversity net gain requirements. In addition, the proposal is for the external alterations of an existing building, and there would be no loss of biodiversity as a result of the proposal. As such, the proposal would not result in any unacceptable harm to the biodiversity.

Conclusion

The proposal is exempt from BNG requirements and would not result in any unacceptable ecological harm, it is therefore in accordance with Core Policy 50 and Policy GI1 of the CNP.

Other Issues

Whilst the Council's Highways department has been consulted, no objections have been raised and it is not considered that the proposal would result in any harm to the local highway network given there are no proposed changes to the existing car parking, access and turning provision.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

The proposed development is considered acceptable in principle, its impacts on the character and appearance, neighbouring amenities and ecology. As such, the proposal is in accordance with the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the National Planning Policy Framework, and all other relevant material considerations

RECOMMENDATION:

That Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to conditions.

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 and documents:

Application form; received 24 February 2026

Location Plan; P21-050-0532-01-A; received 24 February 2026

Proposed Site Plan; P21-050-0532-300-A; received 24 February 2026

Existing and Proposed Elevations; P21-050-0532-05-A; received 24 February 2026

Existing and Proposed Internal Layout – GA; P21-050-0532-06-A; received 24 February 2026

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

INFORMATIVE NOTES:

Building Regulations

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.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition (biodiversity gain condition) that development may not begin unless:

(a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and

(b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan, if one is required in respect of this permission would be Wiltshire Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. For further information on exempt developments please refer to:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because one or more of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements is considered to apply.