

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Application No: PL/2026/02504 and PL/2026/02317
Change of use to existing first floor flats No.5 & 5a (Use Class C3) to ancillary office accommodation for the existing veterinary surgery (Use Class E), together with internal alterations to reconfigure consulting, waiting and support areas, and installation of a new external access ramp to improve inclusive access.
5 Estcourt Street, Devizes, SN10 1LQ

Please find following comments in respect of the above application(s).

Recommendations:

☐	No comment
☐	Support in principle subject to amendments to the scheme (as set out below)
☐	Support subject to conditions (as set out below)
☐	Object (for reasons set out below)
☒	No objections

Scope of comments: the following comments relate to the built historic environment.

Policy: 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 or enhancing 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.

The NPPF outlines government policy, including its policy 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 214-216 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 should 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.

The Council's Core Strategy Policy CP58 '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."

Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy Policy CP57 '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.

Historic England Advice Note 2 – Making changes to Heritage Assets illustrates the application of policies set out in the NPPF in determining applications for PP and LBC.

Site and assets considered: The property is a Grade II listed building located in Devizes Conservation Area. The property also affects the setting of numerous other listed buildings in the locality.

Proposal: The proposal seeks the change of use to existing first floor flats No.5 & 5a (Use Class C3) to ancillary office accommodation for the existing veterinary surgery (Use Class E), together with internal alterations to reconfigure consulting, waiting and support areas, and installation of a new external access ramp to improve inclusive access.

Relevant planning history: K/17117/L – ALTERATIONS (approved); ENQ/2025/01143.

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

Information considered/provided: 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 "Heritage 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.

However, 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.

Significance of assets and contribution of setting: The NPPF defines significance 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 assesses significance in a similar manner, referring to evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values of a place.

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.

Assessment: The property is a Grade II listed building located in Devizes Conservation Area.

The proposals comprise of:

- Minor interior alterations to reconfigure existing rooms to provide updated veterinary facilities, including specific cat only areas, additional offices and an additional W/C.
- Localised adjustment or introduction of internal partitions, with no works to the principal front elevation or roof.
- Installation of a new external entrance ramp to the side of the building to improve accessibility to the veterinary practice.

There are no proposed changes to the principal front elevation, roof, or any other elements identified in the list description as key to the building's special architectural and historic interest.

Internal works are confined within the building, retain the historic building fabric, and will be lightweight reversible construction to protect the overall layout.

The proposed ramp is located on the side elevation, is of low height, and will not be visible in the primary view of the principal façade. The ramp will also be constructed in a simple concrete to remain in keeping with the established hard landscaping and wider conservation area materiality.

Overall, the proposals preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and character and appearance of the Devizes Conservation Area.

Summary & 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.