

APPLICATION FOR CONSENT TO DISPLAY ADVERTISEMENT OFFICER DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/02012
APPLICATION TYPE:	Consent to display advertisement
SITE ADDRESS:	Town Hall, The Strand, Calne, SN11 0EF
DESCRIPTION:	Consent to display eight Progress Pride flags from existing wall mounts
RECOMMENDATION:	APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

PROPOSAL

The description was amended during registration of the application in the interest of precision. The application seeks consent to display advertisement(s) for the flying of eight Progress Pride flags from wall mounts located around the north and east facades of the building beneath first floor windows. They are made from polyester, measure approx. 1.14m by 2.29m, and the design features six horizontal stripes of red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet, chevrons in black, brown, pink, pale blue and white stripes, and a yellow triangle and purple circle.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is Calne's Town Hall, a Grade II listed building [NHLE: 1270827]. It was built circa 1884-6 to designs by C B Oliver of Bath¹ in a Gothic/Tudor Revival style; it has walls of squared and coursed limestone rubble, crenelated parapets with slate roofs brought to gables, dressed stone crossed transom and mullion windows, and a clock tower with pyramid top. It forms a focal point on the corner of a crossroad; its setting is characterised by the combination of the surrounding townscape, open spaces and river channel that form the street scene. It is in the settlement boundary of Calne. Relevant designations and constraints include Calne Conservation Area, surrounding listed buildings within 50m², and adjacent A-classified highway.

PLANNING HISTORY

There is no planning history at or nearby to the site that is identified as being likely to affect consideration of the application.

¹ Orbach, J. Pevnsner, N. and Cherry, B. (2021) The Buildings of England: Wiltshire. London: Yale University Press, p.199.

² Of which, the settings of the following are potentially sensitive to the proposal - Grade II: Barclays Bank the Old Bank House [NHLE: 1247494], Wiltshire County Library [1270950], Old Fire Station at Rear of Town Hall [1247534], 1 Patford Street [1247339], 7 Patford Street [1247349]. Grade II*: Lansdowne Arms Hotel and Former Coach House, Stable and Brewhouse [1247495].

RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007

Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS):

- Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping (CP57)
- Core Policy 58: Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment (CP58)
- Core Policy 62: Development Impacts on the Transport Network (CP62)

Saved policies of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 (NWLP)

Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan: Made 2025 (CCNP)

- Policy BE1: Design Principles for Local Distinctiveness
- Policy BE2: Heritage Assets

Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan: Design Guidelines and Codes March 2023 (CCNP DGC)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

National Design Guide (NDG)

Flying flags: a plain English guide – June 2021

Outdoor advertisements and signs: a guide for advertisers – June 2007

Institute of Lighting Professionals: The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements (2014) PLG 05.

Wiltshire Design Guide SPD (WDG)

Calne Conservation Area Statement 2000

Historic England Guidance:

- Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2 (GPA2)
- The Setting of Heritage Assets. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 (2nd Edition) (GPA3)
- Making Changes to Heritage Assets. Historic England Advice Note 2. (HEAN2)

- Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets
Historic England Advice Note 12 (HEAN12)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The following consultees and interested parties were invited to comment on the application:

Calne Town Council – Support (07/05/2026).

Wiltshire Council's Highways Team – No objection (27/04/2026).

Wiltshire Council's Conservation Officer – No objection (20/05/2026).

REPRESENTATIONS

There is no statutory requirement for a Local Planning Authority to publicise applications for consent to display advertisements. Nonetheless, this application was publicised to immediate neighbours, by a press advert published in the Wiltshire Gazette & Herald on 16 April 2026, and by a site notice displayed on 14 April 2026.

Thirteen [13] letters of representation were made by members of the public (9 x Object, 4 x Support). The comments therein are summarised as follows:

- That the advertisement will bring love and positivity to the area;
- That small towns like Calne need a presence for inclusion and diversity;
- That the advertisement makes a powerful statement about active inclusion, safety, belonging, as an educational tool, and by fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
- That the advertisement would be a frivolous use of public money while other public services are under resourced;
- That the advertisement is a controversial and hostile symbol;
- That the advertisement's display would be inappropriate following the findings of the Cass Review;
- That the advertisement is out of keeping with the area due to its ugly, strident or aggressive-looking design;
- That public authorities should be institutionally neutral and civic buildings maintained as neutral spaces;
- That the advertisement would foster division between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, with particular regard to religious beliefs and communities;

- That the advertisement is in breach of the regulations as it does not benefit from express consent;
- That the advertisement would be of significant detriment to the visual amenity of the Town Hall, which is a listed building, and Town Centre in which it is located; and
- That the Conservation and Unionist Party Manifesto 2024 sets out intentions to amend the Equality Act.

ASSESSMENT

Regulation 3 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (the “Regulations”) requires that Local Planning Authorities exercise their powers in relation to the display of advertisements in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan, in so far as they are material, and any other relevant factors.

Preliminary matters

The application relates to the flying of a flags from wall mounts. The government’s guidance³ is that more flags should be flown, as they are a very British way of expressing joy and pride and emotive symbols which can boost local and national identities, strengthen community cohesion and mark civic pride. However, the flying of flags is controlled as advertisement to ensure that they do not adversely impact amenity or public safety.

Some flags require express consent from the Local Planning Authority (LPA), whereas others benefit from “deemed consent”, and in either case they are subject to conditions.

Flags benefitting from deemed consent include the Union Flag, the flag of the United Kingdom, and the Rainbow flag, otherwise known as the “Pride” flag designed by Gilbert Baker. Where a flag does not benefit from deemed consent, contrary to assertions in some representations, the Regulations do not preclude an application for consent for its display.

This application is made for the display of the “Progress Pride” flag, designed by Daniel Quasar. This flag is an updated version of the Rainbow flag that includes additional colours and shapes to represent wider communities⁴. Having regard to Schedule 3 of the Regulations, express consent is required for the flying of the Progress Pride flag.

³ Flying flags: a plain English guide – June 2021 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flying-flags-a-plain-english-guide/flying-flags-a-plain-english-guide>).

⁴ The Progress Pride Flag – October 2025 (https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/the-progress-pride-flag?srsId=AfmBOoq0UEXgY_JkqiPJEWUBkOsWfGhhbW6dWF57JoE3A9fDxNO64czS).

Regulation 3(4) states that, unless it appears to the local planning authority to be required in the interests of amenity or public safety, an express consent for the display of advertisements shall not contain any limitation or restriction relating to the subject matter, content or design of what is to be displayed.

Furthermore, the Planning Practice Guidance⁵ advises that, unless the nature of the advertisement is in itself harmful to amenity or public safety, consent cannot be refused because the LPA considers the advertisement to be misleading (in so far as it makes misleading claims for products), unnecessary or offensive to public morals.

Notwithstanding the above, and while it is its effect on amenity and public safety that are determinative, regard is to be had to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

The PSED sets out that, in the exercise of its functions, the LPA must have due regard to the need to, among other things, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Amenity

Regulation 3(2)(a) does not define amenity exhaustively, but it includes aural and visual amenity, and factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest.

Calne Town Hall is a handsome architectural composition and occupies a prominent corner location on The Strand, illustrative of the town's prosperity and civic pride in the late 19th century. Its significance and special interest as a Grade II listed building, in so far as is relevant, comprise its architectural and historic interest.

The Town Hall forms part of the setting of several other listed buildings in the immediate vicinity. Their significance and special interest, and more than special interest in the case of Lansdowne Arms Hotel and Former Coach House, Stable and Brewhouse, primarily comprises their architectural and historic interests.

The immediate surroundings comprise Area 4 of the Calne Conservation Area (CCA). The published statement⁶ describes that the character and appearance of CCA can primarily be discerned from the combination of its protected buildings and features, its historic routes, paths, views, boundaries and nodes, its valuable open space and

⁵ PPG, Paragraph: 026 Reference ID: 18b-026-20140306

(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/advertisements>).

⁶ Calne Conservation Area Statement 2000

water, and its significant trees and foliage. The Town Hall is identified as a “dominant landmark building”, forming part of a focal point (“node”) on The Strand (p.26).

In so far as it relates to amenity, the LPA has a duty under S72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CCA.

The flags would be flown from eight in simple metal wall mounts (already installed) below first-floor window height. They would project the flags at an angle of approx. 45 degrees from the facades of the building.

The representations that were made during the consultation period indicate that some consider the flag’s symbolism to be a source of discomfort and that the design would be detrimental to the amenity of the area and the Town Hall. Conversely, Wiltshire Council’s Conservation Officer (CO) advises the effect on the CCA and the listed buildings would be neutral.

Flags in various designs or colours are to be reasonably expected given the building’s civic function. Although multiple, each flag would be spaced at intervals along the façade, and this would broadly respect the rhythm of the elevational design.

Their multi-coloured design gives a bright appearance that would draw the eye, but this is not unusual as flags are intended to attract attention. While they would visually contrast with the stonework, they would appear as splashes of colour that would appear to animate rather than dominate the building’s monumental facades and nor would they detract from its architectural flourishes.

The CO notes the presence of other flags as a feature of this part of the CCA, but Regulation 3(3) allows the LPA to disregard, if it thinks fit, any advertisement that is being displayed. Nonetheless, flags would appear fitting around this ‘node’ characterised by prominent civic buildings. Accordingly, it would preserve the character and appearance of the CCA and the settings of nearby listed buildings.

Regard has been had to the concerns raised but, for the reasons above, the advertisements would have acceptable effects in respect of factors relevant to amenity. They would cause no harm to the significance of the listed building, the character or appearance of the CCA, or the significance of surrounding listed buildings through change within their setting.

While not determinative, the display would also accord with the aims of adopted guidance and Policy BE1 and BE2 of the Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan, CP57 (iv and x) and CP58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, and paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which together seek to ensure advertisements

meet a high standard of design that are sympathetic to local character and heritage assets.

Public safety

Regulation 3(2)(b) defines that factors relevant to public safety include the safety of persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military). Factors also include whether the advertisement is likely to obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air, and whether the advertisement is likely to hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.

The Town Hall is located beside a crossroad on the main route through the town. The road features signal operated pedestrian crossings, a bus stop, and there are wall mounted CCTV cameras overlooking the public realm mounted to the exterior of the building.

The flags would project upwards from the façade at an angle of 45 degrees, the maximum depth of which is stated as 2.5m. While the bus stop is closer to the building than the road, Wiltshire Council's Highways Team raise no objection and, accordingly, it is understood that the flags would not interfere with vehicles using it.

The flags would not interfere with the operation of the traffic signals. Furthermore, and although multiple and brightly coloured, they are distinguishable from traffic signage such that they would not form a hazardous distraction for drivers.

The CCTV camera on the northeast corner of the building is mounted onto a bracket which elevates the camera above the line of the flag mounts. The flags closest to this corner would limit the device's field of visibility at oblique angles.

The ownership or operator of the cameras is not known; however, the display is unlikely to hinder its surveillance operation to such a degree that there would be unacceptable risk to public safety in the surrounding public realm. Particularly in the context of the other cameras which would not be affected.

The discomfort expressed by some representations is acknowledged and no objection is raised by the Highways Team. For the above reasons, it is concluded that the nature of the advertisements would have acceptable effects over factors relevant to public safety.

Furthermore, and although not determinative, it would accord with Core Policy 62 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy

Framework which together seek to ensure advertisements are designed to safeguard the safety of the public.

Other matters

Representations refer to the PSED and perceive the message conveyed by the flags as divisive, while others consider it empowering. Flags can indeed be emotive symbols, capable of multiple interpretations and functioning as educational tools.

There are also concerns raised around public expenditure, expectations for neutrality among public authorities and civic buildings, references to an NHS England report into gender identity services for children and young people (Cass Review), and references to pledged amendments to the Equality Act in the Conservative and Unionist Party's 2024 General Election Manifesto.

The LPA is required by the Regulations to exercise its powers in the interests of amenity and public safety. The matters raised, for the above reasons, do not lead to a conclusion other than that the advertisements would be acceptable in relation to factors relevant to such matters. Therefore, and having had due regard to the PSED, and the other concerns, granting consent would be a lawful and proportionate exercise of those powers.

Conditions

Regulation 14(1) sets out the LPA's powers to grant express consent, including to grant consent subject to conditions. The LPA may impose the standard conditions set out in Schedule 2 or any other condition as it thinks fit, subject to Regulations 14(6) and (7). Relevant standard conditions have been recommended in this case.

Under Regulation 14(7), any express consent is subject to a deemed condition that it expires at the end of a period of five [5] years, after which it will benefit from a deemed consent subject to any conditions that were imposed by the express consent. Although the applicant states consent is sought from 1 to 30 June 2026 only, there is no amenity or public safety reason to control or limit the time period. Accordingly, no such condition has been recommended.

CONCLUSION

The advertisement(s), in this case eight flags, would have acceptable effects in respect of factors relevant to amenity and public safety. Furthermore, and although not determinative, it would not conflict with the provisions of the development plan in so far as they are material. Subject to the recommended conditions, such as those suggested or required by the Regulations, the application should be supported.

RECOMMENDATION

That consent to display advertisement(s) be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

Conditions:

1. No advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or any other person with an interest in the site entitled to grant permission.

REASON: In exercise of Regulation 14(1) of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 to ensure adherence to the standard conditions set out under Schedule 2 of the Regulations.

2. Any advertisement displayed, and any site used for the display of advertisements, shall be maintained in a condition that does not impair the visual amenity of the site.

REASON: In exercise of Regulation 14(1) of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 to ensure adherence to the standard conditions set out under Schedule 2 of the Regulations.

3. Any structure or hoarding erected or used principally for the purpose of displaying advertisements shall be maintained in a condition that does not endanger the public.

REASON: In exercise of Regulation 14(1) of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 to ensure adherence to the standard conditions set out under Schedule 2 of the Regulations.

4. Where an advertisement is required under these Regulations to be removed, the site shall be left in a condition that does not endanger the public or impair visual amenities.

REASON: In exercise of Regulation 14(1) of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 to ensure adherence to the standard conditions set out under Schedule 2 of the Regulations.

Informatives to Applicant:

1. The applicant is reminded to note that the building to which this consent to display advertisement relates is a Grade II listed building. This consent should not be construed as authority to carry out any works for the alteration, extension or demolition of the building in a way which affects its character as a building of

special architectural or historic interest. Such works will require separate Listed Building Consent under S7 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. For further information, please visit our website (<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/15292/Listed-building-consent-for-works-repairs-or-alterations>).