

From: HOWARD WATERS [REDACTED]

Sent: 02 June 2026 11:25

To: Developmentmanagement <Developmentmanagement@wiltshire.gov.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: FAO Peter Crozier: PL/2026/03025 : - Proposed partial change of use of ground floor of existing commercial floorspace, (Class E) to a domestic apartment, (Class C3). Some commercial floor space is to be retained as Class E.

Dear Peter

I hope you are well.

I am writing as the agent for this application and in response to The Town Council's consultation response for this application proposal.

We would wish the following comments in response to be taken fully into consideration please and for this e-mail to be placed on the planning website as additional justification for the proposal.

The planning balance should also of course take into consideration that there is currently a significant shortfall in the council's housing supply and that this application proposal would provide a high-quality, highly sustainable unit of accommodation within the heart of the town centre.

The proposal does not involve the loss of the commercial frontage to Market Place and does not result in the complete loss of commercial use from the building. Approximately 73m² (785 sq ft) of Class E commercial accommodation will be retained at ground floor level.

The Town Council expresses concern regarding the viability of the retained commercial unit. However, the professional evidence submitted by Loveday Chartered Surveyors concludes that demand within Chippenham town centre is strongest for smaller self-contained units of approximately 750-800 sq ft and identifies several recent lettings of comparable accommodation.

The Applicant respectfully submits that the Town Council's comments do not adequately address the current position of the property.

This prominent town centre building was formerly occupied by Halifax but has now been vacant for a considerable period. It has also been removed from the non-domestic rating list and therefore generates no business rates income.

In these circumstances, the realistic planning balance is not between a larger occupied commercial unit and a smaller occupied commercial unit. Rather, it is between continued vacancy of an oversized commercial unit and a proposal which retains an active commercial frontage whilst creating a more marketable commercial unit supported by professional evidence.

The Applicant is currently preparing a wider programme of investment into the property expected to exceed £[REDACTED] including refurbishment works and enhancement of the commercial frontage. However, that investment is dependent upon securing a commercially viable and sustainable configuration for the building as a whole.

The Applicant is concerned that insufficient weight has been given to the negative consequences of continued vacancy. A prominent vacant building within the primary frontage does not support the vitality or viability of the town centre. On the contrary, prolonged vacancy reduces activity, discourages investment and creates an unattractive impression for residents, visitors and prospective occupiers.

The proposal represents an opportunity to bring a long-vacant building back into productive use, secure substantial private investment, retain commercial accommodation within the primary frontage and provide a configuration which reflects current market demand.

For those reasons, the Applicant respectfully submits that the proposal would support, rather than undermine, the vitality and viability of Chippenham town centre and requests that planning permission be granted.

We would be pleased to discuss any aspect of the application proposal with you as may be helpful.

Kind regards

Howard Waters

Howard J E Waters - Architect

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