



RCC TOWN PLANNING CONSULTANCY



Site: 1 High Street, Ramsbury, Wiltshire, SN8 2PE

Proposal: Change of use of former retail space to part of existing dwellinghouse, replacement rear extension and internal alterations.

On behalf of: Toby and Olivia Bartholomew

Date of Issue: June 2026



RCC TOWN PLANNING CONSULTANCY

PLANNING AND DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicants to support their planning application to allow the existing retail space at number 1 High Street, Ramsbury to be utilised as residential accommodation, in conjunction with the rest of their home. The property is Grade II listed and comprises three floors, with the former retail space located in part of the ground floor area. The proposals also show the replacement of a modern conservatory style extension and modest internal alterations. This submission follows the refusal of planning application PL/2025/09823 and listed building application PL/2025/10003 for a similar scheme.
- 1.2 Up until August 2009, the retail space had been occupied by Hills Stores. It was then used by Hills Stores Charity Shop between September 2009 and January 2024. The charity shop, rebranded as Ramsbury Community Charity Shop, relocated in January 2024 to new premises created through the conversion of the former public toilets. The former retail area at 1 High Street has therefore remained vacant since this time, with the applicants moving into the property in late 2023.
- 1.3 The applicants submitted applications PL/2025/09823 and PL/2025/10003 to allow this former retail space to form part of their home. The change of use proposals required a minimal level of internal works, including a new stair arrangement to achieve access to a new bedroom in what was an attic storage area for the shop. They also proposed to replace a modern conservatory with a new extension and the partial removal of an internal wall and opening up of window area.
- 1.4 These applications were both refused on the 10th February 2026 for the following reasons:

PL/2025/09823

1. *Insufficient evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the premises are no longer viable for their existing or any reasonable community use, or that all reasonable options to retain such a use have been exhausted. The proposal fails to provide any evidence in respect of marketing for sale or rent on reasonable terms that would take into account the condition/status of the build and market conditions. The proposal is therefore contrary to Core Policy 49 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework.*
2. *The unjustified loss of a community facility within a Large Village would undermine the settlement's role in meeting local needs and reducing the need to travel, contrary to Core Policies 1 and 2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework objectives to support local services and sustainable travel patterns.*



3. *The proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed building and the Ramsbury Conservation Area through the rear design's visual impact. Further harm is caused to the listed building through loss of the continued use as a shop which is an integral part of the value and significance of the listed building. The harm has not been clearly and convincingly justified and there are no public benefits which outweigh the harm. The development is therefore contrary to Core Policy 58 and National Planning Policy Framework heritage policies, which require great weight to be given to an asset's conservation and any harm to be justified and outweighed by public benefits.*

PL/2025/10003

1. *The proposed rear extension (replacement conservatory) by reason of its roof lantern and resulting bulk would read as a visually assertive and insensitive form that is viewed as an incongruous addition to listed building's rear elevation, thereby causing less than substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II listed building and the Ramsbury Conservation Area. Great weight must be given to the asset's conservation and any harm requires clear and convincing justification; none has been provided. The claimed public/heritage benefits cannot be relied upon to outweigh the harm while the loss of the shop use remains unjustified as the optimum viable use of the building. The proposal therefore fails the statutory tests in Sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, conflicts with NPPF Section 16, and is contrary to Core Policy 58 (Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment) and Core Policy 57 (Ensuring high quality design and place shaping) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, as amplified by the Wiltshire Design Guide (SPD, 2024).*
- 1.5 It is important to note that despite these refusals, there were no objections received to the loss of the retail unit from either the Parish Council or local community – thus emphasising that this proposal does not represent the loss of a locally valued resource.
- 1.6 However, since these refusals, the applicants and their design and planning team have regrouped to discuss the various options and the way forward. The retail unit has been marketed with Stibbard Property and the design of the rear extension has now been revised to address the Council's concerns. This statement will not only set out these changes, but it will also cite emerging planning policy and a recent grant of planning permission relating to the loss of a community use. In the example referred to in Section 4.0 of this statement, a more flexible application of Policy CP49 was adopted, resulting in planning permission being granted for the change of use of a community facility to residential use. Notably, in that case the community use did not have an alternative permanent premises at the time permission was granted. By comparison, the circumstances of the current application are materially

different, as the charity shop use has not been lost but has instead been successfully relocated elsewhere within the village, ensuring the continued provision of the service to the local community.

- 1.7 This statement will also have regard to the emerging direction of national planning policy as reflected in the draft National Planning Policy Framework. Whilst the draft NPPF carries limited weight as a material consideration at this stage, it nevertheless provides a clear indication of the Government's intended policy approach. Of particular relevance is draft Policy HC6, which seeks to protect only key community facilities where their loss would result in the removal of the last facility of its type serving the area.
- 1.8 A detailed schedule of works by DRA Architects forms part of the planning application and sets out in further detail what changes are sought. This report should be read alongside this Planning Statement.

2.0 SITE CONTEXT

- 2.1 This application concerns 1 High Street in Ramsbury; a Grade II listed building situated within the Ramsbury Conservation Area. The property is at the eastern extent of the High Street before one enters The Square, within the centre of the village. There are a number of listed and significant unlisted buildings within the High Street, The Square and village as a whole.
- 2.2 The High Street is characterised by its continuous frontage of buildings facing towards the built area, with those on the southern side benefiting from their contrasting long gardens and open water meadows to the south. The array of buildings and their uses have evolved in response to the village's changing social and economic requirements. Over time, a number of the traditional buildings have alternated between commercial and residential use, demonstrating the area's capacity for adaptive re-use. Within the High Street, there are a variety of property types including dwellings without shopfronts, dwellings which have incorporated former retail areas/ shopfronts and other commercial units.
- 2.3 These transitions and adaptation of the High Street is described in the Ramsbury Conservation Area Statement – extract below:

High Street

The present architectural appearance of the High Street is a product of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The replacement of buildings following the fires that devastated the village in 1648, 1781 and 1862 created a uniformity which is still evident today. Much of the High Street is 18th and 19th century and, although the scale of buildings is modest, the quality of individual buildings is high. The uniformity is however disturbed by 20th century developments such as the bungalows, the Fire Station, and the houses of Saxon Forge, at the western end of the High Street. The alignment of the street is important, especially at its eastern end where the view changes as you approach The Square. This gives particular prominence to the buildings on the outside of the curve, although looking west from The Square the buildings on the north side are the more obvious.

Shops and former shops together with the Burdett Arms PH, the library and the Memorial Hall emphasise the importance of High Street as a former commercial centre although shop closures reflect the changing times and illustrate the greater demand for housing. Oaks House, the former Ramsbury Institute, is a prominent building by virtue of its size and position just outside the Lych gate to the churchyard. Although listed as early 19th century, the building contains heavy timber framing and was clearly a property of considerable status and this was revealed several years ago during major restoration.

(Extract from Kennet District Council - Ramsbury Conservation Area Statement, June 2003)



- 2.4 Although Ramsbury is a modestly sized village, it remains well-served by a range of facilities and services, including a separate post office (6 High Street) and local convenience store (Costcutters at 14 Oxford Street). Ramsbury is also well placed being only 6.5 miles from Marlborough and 5.5 miles from Hungerford where there is a wide range of shops and services.
- 2.5 The position of the site is shown below at Figure 1, whilst Figure 2 is a photograph of the property as viewed from the High Street, whilst an example of the wider streetscene is shown in Figure 3.

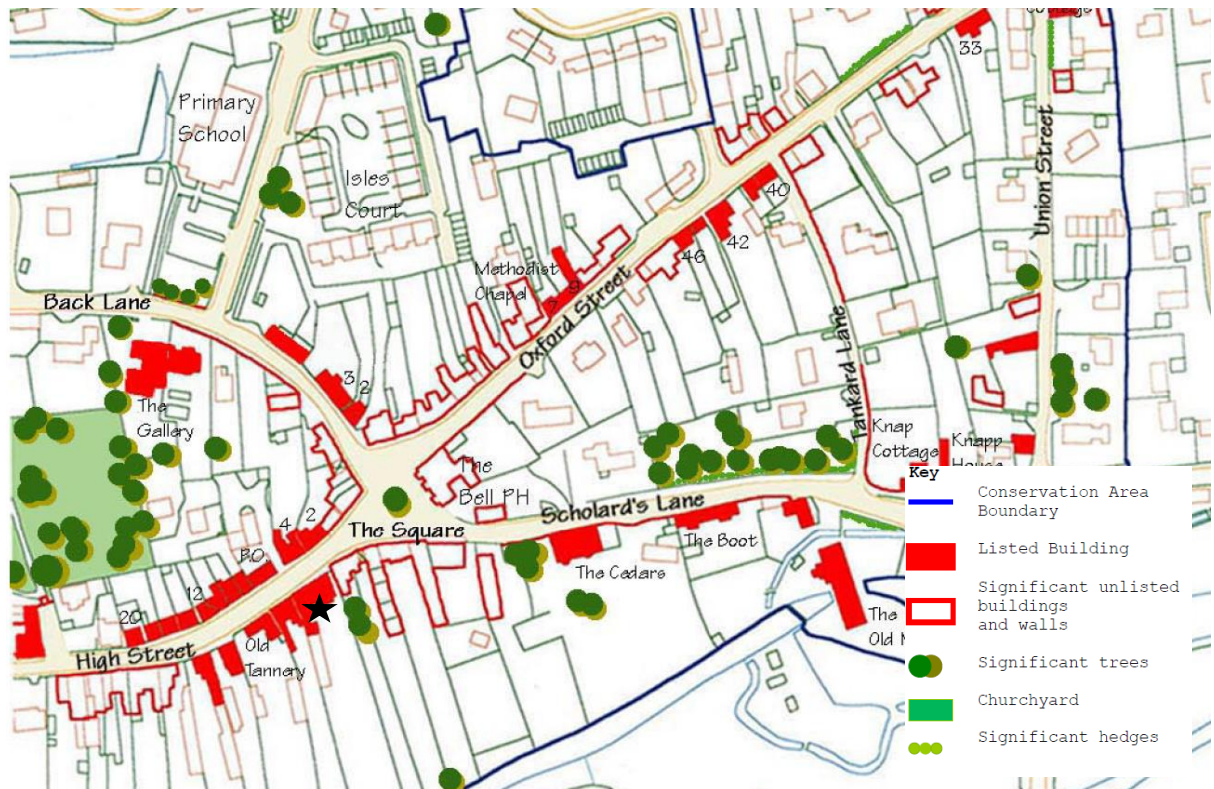


Figure 1: Extract from the Ramsbury Conservation Area Statement - No.1 annotated with ★



Figure 2: No.1 High Street – shop front and signage evident



Figure 3: Post office at 6 High Street



Figure 4: Properties on The Square



Figure 5: Golden Lion Gallery, 5 The Square



Figure 6: Properties opposite the application site



Figure 7: Internal view of former shop



Figure 8: Internal view of rear of former shop



Figure 9: Rear elevation – modern conservatory extension to be replaced

2.6 As previously described, the application building has historically been in a mixed use of residential and retail, resulting in both part domestic and part retail fenestration to the front elevation. The majority of no.1 was put to

residential use but a small portion of the ground floor had been in use as a local village stores. The retail space is very modest in size (circa 32 square metres) with a small area of attic storage space and staff kitchen/WC. As is commonplace, changing retail habits meant that the shop was no longer viable and it ceased trading in 2009. It was subsequently occupied by the village charity shop who then achieved funding to refurbish the redundant toilet block and relocate. This funding had already been secured before the applicant purchased no.1.

- 2.7 The applicants are seeking consent to actively include this former retail element within the residential use of their property, as well as carry out other modest alterations to the property.
- 2.8 The property itself is largely of red brick construction under a slate roof. The official listing entry describes the building as follows:

10/193 No 1

22.8.66

GV II

House. c1820-40. Diaper brickwork with slate roof. 2-storey, 3 bays with later addition left containing shop. 4-panelled door in centre bay with reeded doorcase and simple bracketed canopy. 16-pane sashes with wide moulded boxes. Brick dentilled eaves. 4-flue stack between bays 2 and 3 where blocked window on elevation.

Listing NGR: SU2754071555

Source: Historic England

- 2.9 Whilst the residential element of no.1 is being occupied, the shop remains redundant and is in a very poor state of repair. As the viability of the shop steadily declined over the years, so did the investment into this part of the building. There is a leaking roof which needs addressing, asbestos tiles on the roof and there is no heating and the space is suffering from damp problems. The space therefore requires significant investment. A viability report has been submitted in support of the proposals and is discussed in section 4.0 of this statement, alongside the details of the marketing that has now taken place.
- 2.10 This application seeks to change the use of the building to part of the residential unit but retain the shop front. Repairs and improvements also form part of the proposals and represent a significant investment in the listed building that would otherwise not be forthcoming.
- 2.11 This statement will now detail the planning policy context before the discussion of the planning merits and heritage implications of the proposal.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1 The development plan is the Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015 (WCS). There is no neighbourhood plan covering Ramsbury.
- 3.2 Material considerations comprise Government guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). At local level, the Ramsbury Conservation Area Statement (2003), Wiltshire Design Guide (2024) and the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011- 2026 Car Parking Strategy are a relevant material considerations.
- 3.3 The draft NPPG is also a material consideration although its weight is limited.
- 3.4 The tables below list the relevant policies and guidance for decision making.

WILTSHIRE CORE STRATEGY

Policy	Title
CP 1	Settlement Strategy
CP 2	Delivery Strategy
CP 14	Spatial Strategy: Marlborough Community Area
CP49	Protection of Rural Services and Community Facilities
CP50	Biodiversity and geodiversity
CP51	Landscape
CP57	Design and Place Shaping
CP58	Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment
CP60	Sustainable Transport
CP 61	Transport and Development
CP64	Demand Management

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Chapter	Title
2	Achieving sustainable development
5	Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
9	Promoting sustainable transport
12	Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
15	Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
16	Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

4.0 PLANNING AND HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

4.1 The key planning issues relevant to this proposal are:

- Principle of the scheme;
- Design and relationship with heritage assets;
- Ecology and BNG;

Principle of development

- 4.2 Planning application PL/2025/09823 was refused, in part, because the Council considered that insufficient evidence had been submitted to demonstrate that the former retail premises were no longer viable for their existing use or for any reasonable alternative community use. Refusal Reason 1 specifically stated that the application had failed to provide evidence of marketing for sale or rent on reasonable terms that took account of the condition and status of the building and prevailing market conditions. As a consequence, the Council concluded that it had not been demonstrated that all reasonable opportunities to retain the premises in a community use had been exhausted and that the proposal therefore conflicted with CP49 of the WCS and guidance contained within the NPPF.
- 4.3 Refusal Reason 2 followed from this conclusion, stating that in the absence of sufficient evidence to justify the loss of the premises, the proposal would result in the unjustified loss of a community facility within a Large Village and would therefore undermine the settlement's role in meeting local needs and reducing the need to travel.
- 4.4 Since the refusal of applications PL/2025/09823 and PL/2025/10003, the former retail unit has been actively marketed by Stibbard Property Ltd for commercial or community occupation. A letter from Stibbard Property forms part of the planning application submission and should be read alongside this Planning Statement. This confirms that the premises have been advertised for rent on reasonable terms that take account of the condition of the building, its listed status, the scale of accommodation available and prevailing market conditions. Despite active marketing since March 2nd 2026 and at least 2,250 views online, there has only been one telephone enquiry which did not result in any offers or further enquiry or visit to the unit. This provides market-based evidence demonstrating the lack of demand for the continued occupation of the premises and its village location is cited as one of the main reasons.
- 4.5 Whilst CP49 refers to a six-month marketing period, by the time this application is determined the property will have been actively marketed for approximately six months. Given the lack of any interest so far, there is no reason to indicate that this will change. An updated position can be provided during the planning application process to confirm as such (or otherwise).
- 4.6 We therefore submit that the requirements of CP49 have been satisfied and that the proposal would not result in the loss of a community service or facility serving Ramsbury.



- 4.7 The results of the marketing exercise should also be considered alongside the viability evidence previously submitted. The viability report produced by Strakers demonstrates that the continued use of 1 High Street for commercial purposes is not economically sustainable, whether as retail or office accommodation. Demand for small-scale commercial space in this rural village location is limited, and when set against the significant costs of refurbishment, professional fees, finance and marketing, both options result in an estimated financial loss of approximately £34,000. In contrast, conversion to residential use as part of the adjoining dwelling is shown to be financially viable, generating an estimated 'profit' of around £64,000, reflecting a level of return acceptable to mainstream lenders. On this basis, the appraisal concludes that residential use represents the only viable and deliverable option for the long-term repair and reuse of the listed building.
- 4.8 Notwithstanding the above, whilst it is acknowledged that the purpose of CP49 is to safeguard rural services and community facilities, it is equally important that the policy is applied in a consistent, pragmatic and proportionate manner, having regard to the particular circumstances of each application and the extent to which the community function would genuinely be lost.
- 4.9 Importantly, this application does not result in the loss of the community service previously provided from the premises. The Ramsbury Community Charity Shop relocated in January 2024 to alternative premises within the village (created through the conversion of the former public conveniences) and remains open. The proposal therefore relates to the loss of a former retail unit rather than the loss of the retail use itself. In this regard, the circumstances are comparable to the Council's recent approval for the redevelopment of the former Sea Scout Hall at 44 High Street, Market Lavington (applications PL/2025/04253 and PL/2025/04432). In that case, the Council accepted the loss of the existing building because the scout group were to relocate to alternative premises within the village. In the relevant Delegated Report, the officer concluded that, because the community organisation remained operational and alternative accommodation had been secured, there was no loss of a community facility. This is evidenced in the following extract from the report:

"Currently the group is utilising facilities in the Potterne area which are considered to meet their interim and ongoing needs. It is considered therefore that the scout group is served by existing community facilities and the loss of the proposal site will not impact on their ongoing presence in the locality. As the scout group is still operational and in the local area and intending to return to the village at an alternative site, it is considered that there is no loss of community facility."

Whilst it could be considered that the current application is premature, being submitted prior to the relocation of the scout group within the village, it is considered that the provision of a temporary facility elsewhere to bridge the economically necessary gap between sale of the existing scout hall and

provision of a new scout hall and the confirmation that the scout group has no intention of returning to the site on the High Street overcomes this concern."

- 4.10 As was the situation with the Sea Scout Hall, the community/retail use formerly associated with no.1 High Street has already relocated elsewhere in the village and continues to operate. However, in case of no.1 High Street, the replacement building has already been secured and the charity shop has been well-established in its new premises since January 2024 and continues to operate. In comparison, the scouts only had temporary accommodation secured. We therefore submit that the set of circumstances relating to this application are more strongly in favour of the change of use of part of no.1 to residential.
- 4.11 Additionally, it is also relevant to note that neither Ramsbury Parish Council nor local residents objected to the previous application on the grounds of the loss of the former retail/community use. Indeed, the Parish Council expressed its support for the proposal. Whilst this factor alone is not determinative, it nonetheless highlights that the former shop no longer continues to fulfil an important community function. If the proposal would result in the loss of a valued and needed facility, it is reasonable to expect objections from local residents or the Parish Council. The absence of such objections provides further support for the conclusion that the community use has already been successfully relocated elsewhere within the village and that the proposal would not conflict with the objectives of Core Policy 49.
- 4.12 Furthermore, Ramsbury continues to benefit from a range of local services and facilities. The village still retains a separate post office (6 High Street) and local convenience store (Costcutters at 14 Oxford Street). Sustaining a third local shop is simply not feasible within a village and this was clearly the case with Hills Stores resulting in its closure. The loss of this former retail unit would not undermine the role of Ramsbury as a Large Village, nor would it materially reduce local access to day-to-day services.
- 4.13 Additional support for this approach can be found within the emerging National Planning Policy Framework. Whilst the draft NPPF carries limited weight at present, it nonetheless provides a clear indication of the Government's intended policy direction. Draft Policy HC6 seeks to resist the loss of key community facilities only where they represent the last facility of their type serving the area. It also recognises circumstances where equivalent or better provision has been secured elsewhere. This emerging policy guidance reinforces the view that planning policy should focus on the retention of community services rather than the retention of every individual building from which such services have historically operated.
- 4.14 It is also important to highlight the significant push by Central Government to increase commercial flexibility in sustainable locations. Changes to permitted development rights and the Use Classes Order have extended the flexibility for converting commercial properties to residential use and simplified the process. These changes were introduced to address the declining demand for retail

space and the pressing need for housing, as well as support the adaptive reuse of buildings in response to changing economic conditions. For example, Class MA of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development etc.) (England) (Amendment) Order 2021 allows for the conversion of a Class E building to residential subject to the prior approval process. Although this can't be applied here because of the listed status of no.1, it nonetheless is clear evidence of the Government's drive to make best use of vacant premises.

- 4.15 Taking these matters together, the proposal accords with both the objectives and underlying purpose of CP49. Whilst it is clear that the intention of the Development Plan taken as a whole, is to prevent ill-considered loss of community uses, the intention is not to prevent all such changes of use, where there is sufficient evidence that no harm would arise from its loss. In this case, the community use successfully relocated in January 2024 and remains operational; the premises have been marketed on reasonable terms without attracting interest; viability evidence demonstrates that alternative commercial or community uses are not viable and therefore are not realistic, and the proposal secures the long-term conservation of a designated heritage asset. For the aforementioned reasons, we therefore consider the principle of development is considered acceptable.

[Design and relationship with heritage assets](#)

- 4.16 The starting point for assessing the design of any scheme is the context in which it will be read. Indeed, CP57 states that a high standard of design is required in all new developments, and proposals are expected to create a strong sense of place, drawing on local context and being complimentary to the locality.
- 4.17 Core Policy 58 requires that development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment, and should not have an unacceptable impact on the historic environment, particularly where this could be avoided or mitigated. The impact of the development on the listed building is considered later in this statement.
- 4.18 The Wiltshire Design Guide was formally adopted by Wiltshire Council as a Supplementary Planning Document was on 25th March 2024. This notes that:

"An understanding of the context, history and the cultural characteristics of a site, neighbourhood and region is necessary when making decisions on the siting, design and identity of new developments. It ensures they are well grounded in their locality and more likely to be acceptable to existing communities. Creating a positive sense of place helps to foster a sense of belonging and contributes to well-being, inclusion and community cohesion. The section on Identity elaborates on physical context".

- 4.19 Having regard to the listed building application, Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed

building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest when considering whether to grant listed building consent.

- 4.20 Section 66 of the Act requires local planning authorities, when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 4.21 Section 72 of the Act, requires local planning authorities, when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a conservation area, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of that area.
- 4.22 Chapter 16 of the NPPF sets out the tests to be applied to proposals which affect designated heritage assets.
- 4.23 Internally, the former shop and its associated attic storage space will be integrated with the main house, creating a further reception room on the ground floor and a new bedroom in what was the attic space. This involves the re-opening a historic doorway, creating a single new first-floor door, and locally trimming the attic floor within the shop to accommodate the new staircase. Because the attic level sits approximately four steps higher than the main first floor, this adjustment is both necessary and discreet, ensuring the original structural form remains legible.
- 4.24 Within the existing residential element of the property, the plans show the removal of the poorly related modern conservatory and removal of a section of internal wall to create an open plan kitchen, dining, living area.
- 4.25 The replacement of the modern conservatory will enhance the listed building's character by revealing the original brick corbelling, a feature currently obscured.
- 4.26 In refusing applications PL/2025/09823 and PL/2025/10003, the Council's concerns in heritage and design terms were focused on the design of the replacement conservatory, and in particular the roof lantern. The delegated report concluded that the lantern would project prominently above the roof of the extension, partially obscure views of the first-floor window and appear as a visually assertive addition which competed with the host building. It was this element of the scheme that was considered to give rise to less than substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II listed building and the character and appearance of the Ramsbury Conservation Area.
- 4.27 In response to these concerns, the design of the extension has been revised. Whilst the overall footprint and form of the extension remain unchanged, the roof lantern has been substantially reduced in its visual prominence. The lantern now sits almost flush with the roof slope, projecting by only a minimal amount above the surrounding roof structure. As a result, it no longer interrupts or competes with the rear elevation and has a much more recessive appearance when viewed from the garden and surrounding area.
- 4.28 The revised lantern no longer obscures or detracts from the first-floor window above and allows that element of the listed building to remain the dominant

feature within the rear elevation. The extension is therefore read more clearly as a lightweight and subordinate addition, rather than as a competing architectural feature.

- 4.29 A comparison of the previously refused scheme and the amended scheme now proposed are set out overleaf:



Previously refused scheme – with projecting roof lantern



Proposed scheme with simplified and reduced height roof lantern

- 4.30 The revised design retains the conservatory-style approach that was previously proposed, which is considered appropriate given the modest scale of the extension and that it is to replace an existing modern conservatory. The use of glazing and a lightweight structure ensures that the addition remains visually distinct from, and subservient to, the original building, allowing the evolution of the building to be understood.

- 4.31 In heritage terms, a key benefit is the repair and long-term conservation of the disused shop structure itself. Without these works, the former shop is likely to continue to deteriorate, which would represent a far greater risk to the

significance of the listed building. Overall, the scheme offers a balanced approach: essential repairs and sensitive integration of spaces that sustain the building's use and secure its future, while causing no more than a minimal degree of change to its special architectural and historic interest.

- 4.32 In considering the setting of the surrounding listed buildings and the character and appearance of the conservation area, the proposal will not result in any material changes. The historic character of High Street is based upon its mix of residential, commercial and retail uses existing cheek by jowl. The proposed conversion of this small element of no.1 will simply add to this mix.
- 4.33 It is therefore considered that the specific concerns identified by the Council in its previous refusal have now been addressed. The revised extension represents a modest and sympathetic addition that preserves the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and preserves the character and appearance of the Ramsbury Conservation Area.
- 4.34 The scheme is therefore considered to comply with Sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Core Policies 57 and 58 of the WCS and the heritage objectives of the NPPF.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

- 4.35 Policy CP50 of the WCS recognises that Wiltshire's natural environment is one of its greatest assets and requires that development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation. The policy also advises that development should seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity. Chapter 15 of the NPPF provides further guidance on conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
- 4.36 The applicant commissioned Ethos Environmental Planning to carry out the necessary Ecological Impact Assessment and advise the design process. Their report should therefore be read alongside this statement. This evaluates the building's potential to support bats and other protected species in relation to proposed internal renovation and loft conversion works.
- 4.37 The report details the internal and external inspection and concludes:
- No evidence of bat roosting.
 - No suitable roosting features such as crevices, gaps, or roof voids.
 - High levels of internal light and generally tight, well-sealed building fabric.
- 4.38 The structure therefore has negligible potential to support roosting bats. No further bat surveys or bat-related mitigation are required to support the proposed development.
- 4.39 The only ecological timing constraint relates to breeding birds (pigeons). The report advises that works should avoid March to August unless birds are excluded beforehand.
- 4.40 The scheme is not required to demonstrate biodiversity net gain (BNG) as it a development that does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than:
- 25 square metres (5m by 5m) of on-site habitat
 - 5 metres of on-site linear habitats such as hedgerows

4.41 We therefore consider the scheme to comply with the relevant legislation and planning policies and advice having regard to matters of ecology and biodiversity net gain.

Residential Amenity

4.42 In addressing matters of neighbour amenity, CP57 seeks to ensure developments respect the residential amenities of both new and existing residents.

4.43 As previously noted, this is a village centre location where residential properties lie within close proximity to other commercial and retail uses. The introduction of a residential use to this part of no.1 is therefore compatible with this context and will cause no harm to amenity.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This statement has explained the background to why the former retail unit within no.1 High Street closed and why the unit is no longer viable for such a use. It has also explained that the marketing of the premises for rent for commercial purposes has proven there is no demand. It is therefore clear that the residential use of this space is the optimum use to secure the necessary investment into the listed building.
- 5.2 The change of use, alongside the modest alterations, will bring into active use vacant floorspace within Ramsbury village centre and conservation area.
- 5.3 This statement has also explained how the scheme is acceptable having regard to matters of ecology and neighbour amenity.
- 5.4 The submitted plans show that the scheme has been specifically designed so as to retain as much historic fabric and character as possible and only seeks very modest alterations to the internal layout to facilitate the change of use and improve the wider residential occupation of no.1, replacing the modern conservatory. The harm to the building is therefore very limited and outweighed by the investment and improvements.
- 5.5 We therefore request that the Council approve the planning and listed building applications without further delay.