

APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/02886
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Roger Lewis Building, Goodwood Close, White Horse Business Park, Trowbridge, BA14 0XF
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Change of use from Class B8 (Storage and Distribution) to a mixed use comprising the operation of a tyre depot, including tyre fitting, servicing, MOT testing, and ancillary uses (Sui Generis).
RECOMMENDATION:	APPROVE SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT: The application site is located within the defined settlement boundary for Trowbridge (a Principal Settlement) and within the existing White Horse Business Park, which is an established employment area located on the outskirts of Trowbridge. The White Horse Business Park is referenced within WCS Core Policy 29 as a Principal Employment Area, where former B1 (now within Class E(g)), B2 and B8 uses are safeguarded by CP35 to retain employment opportunities.

The subject unit is detached and benefits from on-site car parking provision, with the surrounding area characterised by commercial, industrial, and office uses.

With reference to the Flood Map for Planning ([Map – Flood map for planning – GOV.UK](#)), the application site is located in Flood Zone 1, with only a small area of the existing car parking area being subject to surface water flooding. The Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) is showing the area to be subject to low groundwater flood risk.

The application site is located within buffer zones associated with the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and within the grey hatched area of the Trowbridge and Westbury Bat Mitigation Strategy (TWBMS).

PROPOSAL: This application is seeking planning permission for the change of use from a Class B8 (Storage and Distribution) use to a sui-generis use comprising tyre fitting, vehicle servicing, MOT testing, and ancillary uses. The proposed sui generis use would operate between the hours of 08:30am to 17:30pm Monday to Friday, and 08:30am to 16:00pm on Saturdays.

With reference to the completed application form, the existing building was operating a B8 use with an ancillary showroom and trade counter (as approved under application reference PL/2021/06501) and was formerly occupied by Knees.

This application is not seeking any physical changes to the existing footprint of the building, with no extensions, demolition or external alterations being proposed as part of this application. The existing access arrangements would also remain unchanged, as would the existing on-site car parking spaces, which would also be retained to serve the existing building and proposed use.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/2021/06501 - Full planning permission – Approved with conditions on: 17/9/2021 – Change of use of unit from B1c (Class E) to Class B8 (storage and distribution) with an ancillary showroom/tradecounter

W/01/01910/FUL - Full planning permission – Approved with conditions on: 24/1/2002 – Enlarged access and changes to car park

W/00/02145/FUL - Full planning permission – Approved with conditions on: 17/5/2001 – Warehouse extension, covered loading canopy and two car parking areas

W/96/01597/FUL - Full planning permission Decision – Approved with conditions on: 30/1/1997 – Two B1 units and one B2 unit with ancillary offices

W/85/00502/OUT - Outline Planning Decision – Approved with conditions on: 11/6/1985 – New business park together with roads and sewers and services

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy: National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); Planning Practice Guidance (PPG); and 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 remain 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 29 Spatial Strategy: Trowbridge Community Area;
- Core Policy 35 Existing Employment Sites;
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 61 Transport and Development
- Core Policy 64 Demand management

West Wiltshire District Local Plan (1st Alteration) - Saved Policy SP3 – Out of Centre Shopping

Draft Wiltshire Local Plan Policies: At Full Council on 19 May 2026, the elected members of Wiltshire Council agreed to withdraw the emerging WLP. As such, the WLP has no material weight for the purposes of the application.

Supplementary Planning Documents and other Guidance:

- Trowbridge and Westbury Bat Mitigation Strategy (TWBMS), July 2025
- Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 (LTP3), adopted 2015 - including the Car Parking Strategy and Cycling Strategy
- Wiltshire Council Local Transport Plan 2025 -2038 (LTP4), adopted March 2025

ISSUES: The main issues that need to be addressed in this case include: Principle of development; impact on neighbouring amenity; highway safety; and ecology.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Trowbridge Town Council: No objection, subject to no significant adverse impact on neighbouring amenity

Wiltshire Council Highways: 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.

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

Below is a summary of the representations received during the consultation period. Only material planning considerations have been taken into account in the assessment of this application. Non-material issues, such as property values or private legal disputes, cannot be considered in the determination process.

Third-party Representations: One representation was received from a representative of the Trowbridge Civic Society, who offered the following comments: *"As the developer of White Horse Business Park, Municipal Mutual, insisted on an unusually high standard of landscaping to attract firms to the site, we feel that a condition of this development, which we support, must be that no advertisement should be erected beyond the boundaries of the site, in order to preserve the attractiveness of the area"*.

It is important to mention that this application is seeking planning permission for the change of use of the existing building, and no advertisements are proposed as part of this application. The applicant would need to apply separately for advertisement consent where necessary.

Whilst advertisement control falls under separate legislation, any future signage would be required to respect the character of the business park in accordance with CP57.

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 CP1 of the adopted 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.

Policy CP2 of the WCS sets out how development would 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 and CP2 ensure that new development is strategically located, sustainable, and supports the character and function of Wiltshire's communities.

Paragraphs 88 and 90 of the NPPF also support sustainable economic growth, including the diversification of existing employment sites.

Paragraph 125d) also requires planning policies and decisions to “*promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings*”.

The application site is located within the defined settlement boundary for Trowbridge, where there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The application site is also located within a safeguarded CP35 principal employment area at White Horse Business Park, which seeks the retention of “*employment purposes within use classes B1, B2 and B8 to safeguard their contribution to the Wiltshire economy and the role and function of individual towns. Proposals for renewal and intensification of the above employment uses within these areas will be supported*”.

It is important to mention that since the WCS was adopted in 2015, there has been a change to the Use Class Order (in September 2020) and B1 has now been replaced and falls within Class E. Use Class B still, however, includes B2 General Industrial (covering certain industrial process) and B8 Storage or Distribution (for storage uses or as a distribution centre and includes open air storage).

Policy CP35 states that within the Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Principal Employment Areas “*proposals for the redevelopment of land or buildings currently or last used for activities falling within use classes B1, B2 and B8 must demonstrate that they meet, and will be assessed against, the following criteria*”.

It is appreciated that the proposal seeks to use the existing unit as a tyre depot with MOT and car servicing, which is a Sui Generis, and does not directly fall within Class E, B2 and B8 uses as safeguarded by CP35. However, it is clear that the proposal would create employment and would be a use which is considered compatible with the business park context.

Each criterion of CP35 has been assessed in turn below:

- i. *The proposed development will generate the same number, or more permanent jobs than could be expected from the existing, or any potential employment use.*

The proposal would not result in the loss of employment, as the new business is seeking to occupy the existing unit, which would ensure that employment opportunities remain on-site.

- ii. *Where the proposal concerns loss of employment land of more than 0.25 ha in the Principal Settlements, Market Towns or Local Service Centres it is replaced with employment land of similar size elsewhere at that settlement.*

Whilst not Class E, B2 or B8 use, the proposal seeks to maintain an employment use within the White Horse Business Park this would not result in the loss of employment use.

- iii. *It can be shown that the loss of a small proportion of employment floorspace would facilitate the redevelopment and continuation of employment uses on a greater part of the site, providing the same number or more permanent jobs than on the original whole site.*

The proposal would not result in the loss of employment. The proposal seeks to ensure the existing unit remains within an active economic use.

- iv. *The site is not appropriate for the continuation of its present or any employment use due to a significant detriment to the environment or amenity of the area.*

The former occupiers, Knees, no longer operate from the unit and therefore this proposal would ensure the existing unit is kept within an active employment and commercial use, which CP35 seeks to safeguard.

- v. *There is valid evidence that the site has no long term and strategic requirement to remain in employment use; the ability of the site to meet modern business needs must be considered, as well as its strategic value and contribution to the local and wider economy both currently and in the long term. It must be shown that the site is no longer viable for its present or any other employment use and that, in addition, it has remained unsold or un-let for a substantial period of time (at least 6 months), following genuine and sustained attempts to sell or let it on reasonable terms for employment use, taking into account prevailing market conditions.*

It is intended that the site remains in active use, with this change of use seeking to provide car servicing, MOT testing and tyre facilities from the existing unit.

- vi. *The change of use is to facilitate the relocation of an existing business from buildings that are no longer fit for purpose to more suitable premises elsewhere within a reasonable distance to facilitate the retention of employment.*

The proposal would ensure that the existing unit is not left vacant and would facilitate the ongoing economic use of the site. The proposed use is not considered to be materially different from other uses found within the wider White Horse Business Park, and this proposal is not seeking any external alterations to the existing building; there would be no change to the appearance of the building.

Whilst detailed employment data has not been submitted for the proposed use, the proposal would retain the site in an active commercial use. Given the nature of tyre fitting and servicing operations, it is reasonably anticipated that the proposal would generate comparable employment compared to a storage and distribution use of this scale, which typically operates with relatively low job densities.

As detailed above, CP35 seeks to safeguard employment land for B use classes, unless specified criteria are met. Whilst the proposal falls outside Use Classes E, B2 and B8, it represents a sui generis employment-generating use that is operationally compatible with an established employment area. The proposal does not result in the loss of employment land to non-employment use; rather, it maintains and diversifies economic activity within the site. In this context, the objectives of CP35, which seek to retain and support employment opportunities, are considered to be broadly satisfied. Therefore, the principle of the development is supported.

Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area: 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.

The application does not propose any alterations to the existing building, which already has an industrial appearance consistent with surrounding development. This is expected given the site's location within an established and protected employment area, where buildings of a functional nature are commonplace.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed use would differ from some nearby uses, which are primarily office-based in the immediate vicinity of the application site, the unit is nonetheless situated within an established employment site where B2 and B8 uses are supported. As such, the proposed use is not considered to be so materially different as to justify refusal of the application.

Furthermore, the proposed vehicle servicing and associated use would not be significantly different in character or impact from other uses found within the wider area.

Amenity: Policy CP57 (Point vii) of the WCS requires development to respect the amenity of existing occupants and ensure appropriate amenity levels for future residents.

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF, reinforces the need for development to provide a high standard of amenity for both existing and future users. Criterion 135(f) requires that development ensure a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

The subject unit is located within an established and designated employment area where a degree of mutual disturbance between neighbouring occupiers is to be expected; however, uses within such areas should generally remain compatible with one another.

It is acknowledged that the proposed change of use would introduce a different activity from that previously consented at the unit. It is also recognised that the proposed use has the potential to generate intermittent noise associated with tyre changes, MOT testing and general vehicle repairs. However, the unit is detached, benefits from its own dedicated on-site parking, and is situated within a wider site safeguarded for B2 and B8 uses.

Whilst the site is located within an established employment area where such impacts are anticipated, it is necessary to ensure that these do not adversely affect neighbouring occupiers. Conditions are therefore recommended to control hours of operation and to require that all activities are undertaken within the building. In this context, it is not considered that the proposal would result in unacceptable impacts on the amenity of existing neighbouring uses.

Highways Impacts and Parking: Transport implications are a key factor in assessing planning applications, especially for larger developments. Proposals must demonstrate:

- Safe and suitable access for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and those with mobility impairments.
- No severe residual impacts on the surrounding highway network.
- Promotion of sustainable travel, reducing reliance on private vehicles.
- Adequate parking and cycle provision, in line with adopted standards.
- Protection and enhancement of public rights of way and active travel routes.

Relevant policies include Core Policies 60–64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, supported by the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan, Car Parking Strategy, and Cycling Strategy. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and LTN 1/20 (DfT) provide further design guidance for active travel infrastructure.

The application does not involve any changes to the existing access to the site, and the existing unit benefits from on-site car parking provision, which would be retained.

The Council's highways department considered the on-site car parking provision to be adequate for the proposed use, and in light of no changes being proposed to the existing access arrangement to the unit, no objections are raised.

Ecology and Biodiversity: 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.

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)

Biodiversity Net Gain: This application is seeking the change of use of the existing building and therefore is considered to satisfy the de minimis exemption, as the proposal would not affect any habitat and thus is not required to demonstrate the statutory 10% BNG.

Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat SAC and the TWBMS: Whilst it is appreciated that the application site is located within various constraints and buffer zones associated with bat species, this application is seeking the change of use only of an existing building to a non-residential use, and therefore the proposal would not have any additional impact on bat habitat compared to the existing situation.

In the absence of any external alterations or external lighting changes, the proposal would not give rise to likely significant effects on the Bath and Bradford on Avon SAC. Accordingly, an Appropriate Assessment is not required in this instance.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION: At the heart of the NPPF there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development requiring local planning authorities to approve development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; and where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless (taken from paragraph 11d of the NPPF):

- The application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing development proposed; or
- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole;

In this instance, the principle of development is considered acceptable when assessed against the settlement strategy of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the proposal complies with the relevant local and national planning policies in respect of design, amenity, highway safety, and ecology, subject to the recommended conditions and any necessary mitigation measures.

No material considerations have been identified that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh these benefits or indicate that permission should be refused, having regard to the assessment above and the representations received.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered acceptable in planning terms and 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