

APPLICATION FOR FULL-PLANNING PERMISSION & LISTED BUILDING CONSENT CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/01374 & PL/2026/01577
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission & Listed Building Consent
SITE ADDRESS:	The Weighbridge , Old Road , Chippenham, SN15 1JA
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Change of Use, repair works and upgrades to the existing building to provide a Class E use (Commercial, Business and Service) for a future tenant.
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve subject to conditions

SITE DESCRIPTION & PROPOSAL

The applications seek planning permission and listed building consent for the change of use, repair, refurbishment and upgrade of the existing building to provide a flexible Class E use (Commercial, Business and Service) for a future occupier at The Weighbridge, Old Road, Chippenham.

The application site comprises a former weighbridge office located adjacent to Chippenham Railway Station and its associated station car park. The building is a Grade II listed building known as "Mortimores Weighbridge Office, Chippenham Station Yard" and is one of the surviving remnants of the historic commercial and industrial activities associated with the railway station and former goods yard. Historically, the building functioned as a weighbridge office, accommodating the recording of goods and freight transported to and from the railway.

The site lies within the Chippenham Conservation Area and is surrounded by a mixture of railway infrastructure, station-related development, commercial uses and residential properties. A number of designated heritage assets are located within the wider area, including other listed buildings associated with the station and historic development of Chippenham.

The proposals comprise the repair and refurbishment of the existing building, including thermal upgrades and internal alterations, together with its re-use as a flexible Class E commercial premises. The works are intended to secure the long-term viable use and maintenance of the building, which has remained vacant for a considerable period.

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
N/05/01205/LBC - Listed building consent Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 6/7/2005 – Repairs to South West Wall

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Statutory Legislation:

Section 16 (Listed Building Consent)/Section 66 (Planning Permission) and Section 72(1) of the Act

National Planning Policy:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- 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 remains 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 10 Chippenham Spatial Strategy
- Core Policy 35 Existing Employment Land
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 58 Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment;
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development;
- Core Policy 64 Demand Management

Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan:

- Policy TC4 – Development within Chippenham Conservation Area

Supplementary Planning Documents and other Guidance:

- Wiltshire Design Guide (adopted April 2024)

ISSUES

The main issues that need to be addressed in this case include:

- Whether the development is acceptable in principle
- Whether the scheme constitutes high quality design
- Whether the scheme would have an acceptable impact upon the reasonable living conditions of the adjoining occupants

- Whether the scheme would preserve or enhance the historic environment
- Whether the proposal would have a negative effect upon highway safety, including if there is sufficient parking for the proposed development
- Whether there would be any harmful impacts upon protected species or priority habitats

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Chippenham Town Council: Support *“The proposed restoration of this listed building, in what appears to be a generally sensitive manner, is welcomed. It is hoped that such works can be expedited as the building is in a poor state of repair and vulnerable to further deterioration. The proposed works, including thermal upgrades, appears justifiable to create a weathertight building and alterations to its existing form would increase its viability as a commercial premises and secure the listed building's future in the longer term. Where there is a loss of historic fabric, this would have limited impact on the significance of the heritage asset. The proposed external repair works would enhance the appearance of the listed building, and that of Chippenham Conservation Area, aligning with CP58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the following aspects of Policy TC4 of the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan, which are: a) preserving or enhancing the special character or appearance of the Conservation Area, c) enhancing positive views identified in the Chippenham Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2024 (positive view identified looking towards The Weighbridge from the footbridge), d) retaining those heritage assets which make a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area (which this building does being identified as a notable building in the Chippenham Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2024), and f) secures an enhancement proposal in the Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan SPG (Enhancement Proposal 6. Encourage the restoration of the listed former coal yard building).*

Attention needs to be paid as to how this busy and narrow intersection with pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles accessing the Station would be managed in conjunction with the proposed use in terms of highway safety.

It is requested that a landscaping scheme, which would enhance the setting of the listed building, be submitted for that part of the site currently comprising of hardstanding. This should include secure cycle parking spaces for staff and visitors in a location which would not impact on the setting of the listed building and showers/changing facilities if appropriate.

The Town Council supports this proposal subject to addressing some of the issues raised.”

WC Highways: No objection subject to conditions

“The site is located within an existing car park, which is accessed from a spur of Union Road, an unclassified Section of Public highway which also connects to Old Road to the North, another unclassified section of public highway, both are subject to a speed limit of 30mph. There are no plans to alter the existing access with the public highway, though the works may require space within the public highway for which a Licence/Permit will be required to be obtained from the LHA.

The proposals are for an E class use over a floor space of 187sqm. There are 2 vehicle parking spaces proposed with bollarded access from the existing private car park area. The vehicle

parking proposed is within the maximum standard set out by Wiltshire Council and therefore deemed acceptable. There is no mention of cycle parking provision, which would be required at a rate of 4 covered spaces for the development, this should include an area for changing/showering in line with requirements set out in LTP3 Cycling Strategy. This can be conditioned as part of any approval.

It is therefore considered that the proposals would not represent a severe adverse effect on the public highway and that no highway objection be raised subject to the following condition and informative:

PARKING (CYCLE) DETAILS REQUIRED

No development shall commence on site until details of secure covered cycle parking and changing and/or shower facilities have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted details shall accord with dimensions, access, location, design and security principals laid out in Appendix 4 of Wiltshire's LTP3 Cycling Strategy. These facilities shall thereafter be provided in accordance with the approved details and made available for use prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted and shall always be retained for use thereafter.

REASON: *To ensure that satisfactory facilities for the parking of cycles are provided and to encourage travel by means other than the private car.*

INFORMATIVE - VEHICLE CROSSOVERS

The application involves works which may affect the public highway. The consent hereby granted shall not be construed as authority to carry out works on the highway. The applicant is advised that a licence will be required from Wiltshire's Highway Authority before any works are carried out on any footway, footpath, carriageway, verge or other land forming part of the highway. Please contact our Streetworks Team at streetworks@wiltshire.gov.uk or by phoning 01225 713 497 or visit their website at <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/highways-roadworks-permit-scheme> to make an application."

WC Conservation: No comment received

Network Rail: *"Whilst there are no principal objections to the type of works proposed, no detail has been submitted in relation to how the works will be carried out without impacting on NR land and operations. Further to this no information related to drainage has been provided.*

Further information related to these works are required to understand how the works will impact upon the Station and Network Rail land."

WC Public Protection: No objection subject to conditions *"The proposal relates to a flexible use within Use Class E, which allows for a wide range of activities including retail, financial/professional services, food and drink (for consumption on the premises), offices, and indoor recreation.*

Whilst some uses within Class E are likely to have minimal noise impacts, others have the potential to generate significant levels of noise, particularly from plant and equipment, customer activity, deliveries, and extended hours of operation.

There are noise-sensitive receptors in close proximity, on both Union Road and Old Road, it is necessary to ensure that the development does not result in adverse impacts on residential amenity.

As the intended future occupants are unknown at this stage we recommend the following conditions:

1. Noise Assessment

Prior to the commencement of any use within Class E that is likely to give rise to noise impacts beyond those typically associated with low-impact uses (such as offices), including but not limited to food and drink uses, indoor recreation, or any use involving plant, equipment, amplified sound, or customer congregation, a noise impact assessment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

An assessment of the acoustic impact arising from the operation shall be undertaken in accordance with BS4142:2014 +A1:2019 and shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority at reserved matters stage together with a scheme of attenuation measures to demonstrate the development can achieve a rating level of 5dB (LAeq) below the typical background (LA90) level at the nearest noise sensitive location.

The acoustic impact assessment and attenuation scheme must be approved by the local planning authority and shall be implemented in full prior to occupation of the development and thereafter be permanently retained for the lifetime of the development.

Core policy 57, Ensuring high design and place shaping such that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable.

2. Restriction on Hours of Use

The premises shall not be open to customers nor shall any external activities, including deliveries or waste collection, take place outside the hours of:

08:00 to 22:00 Monday to Saturday

09:00 to 20:00 Sundays and Bank Holidays

Further advice can be found by visiting this link:

Environmental advice for developers and planning agents - Wiltshire Council"

WC Ecology: No objection subject to conditions

Bats

No evidence of bats was found during the preliminary roost assessment. However, several features potentially suitable for roosting bats were identified, and the building was initially assessed as having moderate roosting potential. A single emergence survey was undertaken in August 2025, during which no bats were recorded roosting, nor commuting or foraging in the surrounding area. High levels of artificial lighting were noted, with all elevations of the building lit. As such, the building was 'downgraded' to an assessment of low roosting potential, and no further survey required, in line with best practice guidelines.

Overall, the works are considered unlikely to adversely impact bats.

Nesting birds

The ecologist observed some gaps suitable for access by nesting birds. The adults, young, eggs and nests of all species of birds are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) while they are breeding. Please be advised that works should not take place that will harm nesting birds (such as vegetation clearance or building demolition) from March to August inclusive. The applicant is advised to check any structure or vegetation capable of supporting breeding birds and delay removing or altering such features until after young birds have fledged.

Other

The proposal is not likely to impact any other protected wildlife.

In line with the NPPF and with CP50, applications must ensure that gains for biodiversity, relevant to local habitats and wildlife populations, should form part of the proposed development. Biodiversity enhancements (such as wildlife-friendly plantings, bird boxes or invertebrate bricks) should be secured via a condition. Bat boxes are not advisable in this case, given the low suitability of the site in general.

Biodiversity Net Gain

From 12 February 2024 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) became mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Based on the information available the biodiversity gain planning condition is not considered to apply to this application as the development meets the following criteria and is therefore below the de minimis threshold, meaning the development:

- o does not impact an onsite priority habitat (a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006); and
- o impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat (as defined in the statutory metric).

Note to case officer: you should be satisfied that the proposals meet the above criteria and act accordingly. Further information will be required from the applicant prior to determination in the event the application is considered to be subject to mandatory biodiversity net gain.

CONDITIONS:

1. Compliance with submitted documents

The development will be carried out in strict accordance with the following documents:

- Section 6 of Ecological Impact Assessment, Ethos, December 2025

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and for the protection, mitigation and enhancement of biodiversity.

2. Enhancements for Biodiversity

Prior to the commencement of any works, including demolition, details of the number, design and locations of ecological enhancements shall be submitted to the local authority for approval. The approved details shall be implemented before occupation of the final works.

REASON: To provide mitigation/enhancement for biodiversity

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;
- A site notice displayed near the site;
- An advertisement placed in the local press.

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.

The Chippenham Cycle Network Development Group supports the principle of redeveloping the derelict site and bringing it back into use. However, they raise concerns that the scheme prioritises private car parking despite the site's highly accessible town-centre location with strong public transport, walking and cycling connections. The Group's main concerns relate to:

- Initial concerns raised about lack of cycling facilities, including insufficient cycle parking and the absence of shower and changing facilities for staff. The plan was revised to include internal cycle storage and they are concerned that not all bikes would fit within the building, and may be constrained internally so not enough room for four bikes. Also concerned the bins may block bike storage. No shower facilities appear to have been provided. The group would prefer to see an external cycle parking area, and a shower room inside the building.
- Road safety impacts, particularly the potential increase in vehicle movements at a busy and complex junction serving the railway station, station car park, footbridge and surrounding businesses.
- Would welcome additional landscaping and planting to improve the public realm and amenity value

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 Context

Core Policy 1: 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.

Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy of the WCS sets out how development will 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.

Core Policy 35 seeks to support the retention and development of employment uses, whilst Core Policy 58 requires development affecting heritage assets to conserve their significance. The NPPF supports the sustainable growth and adaptation of existing buildings, particularly where proposals secure the optimum viable use of heritage assets and support economic activity in accessible locations.

The application seeks planning permission and listed building consent for the repair, refurbishment and re-use of the Grade II listed former weighbridge office together with a flexible Class E use.

The site lies within the settlement boundary of Chippenham, which is identified as a Principal Settlement under Core Policies 1 and 2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy. As such, the site occupies a sustainable location where development is directed and supported in principle, subject to compliance with other relevant development plan policies.

The building has historically been associated with railway-related commercial activities and latterly operated as a coal merchant's office and store. Whilst it has been vacant for a considerable period and has fallen into disrepair, the proposal would facilitate its reoccupation and productive use.

Core Policy 35 seeks to retain employment land and buildings and supports their renewal and intensification for employment purposes. Whilst the building has historically been associated with storage and commercial activities linked to the railway and has remained vacant for a considerable period, the proposed flexible Class E use would retain the property in commercial use and provide opportunities for employment-generating activities. The proposal does not result in the loss of employment land to a non-employment use and would support the productive re-use of a long-vacant building. As such, the objectives of Core Policy 35 are considered to be satisfied.

The site occupies a highly sustainable location adjacent to Chippenham Railway Station and within easy walking distance of the town centre, public transport facilities and surrounding services. The proposed Class E use would provide flexibility for a range of commercial, business and service uses appropriate to this accessible location and would support the continued economic vitality of the area.

The proposal would also secure the repair and continued use of a vacant listed building, helping to ensure its ongoing maintenance and long-term occupation. The acceptability of the works proposed to the heritage asset is considered in detail elsewhere within this report.

The proposal represents the sustainable re-use of a long-vacant building within the settlement boundary of Chippenham. It would support economic activity in a highly accessible location and would not result in the loss of employment land to a non-employment use. The principle of development is therefore considered acceptable and accords with Core Policies 1, 2 and 35 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the objectives of the NPPF.

Impact on Heritage Assets

Policy Context

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 (Listed Building Consent)/Section 66 (Planning Permission) requires that special regard be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Section 72(1) of the Act 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 for planning. Chapter 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development. In particular:

Paragraph 208 requires LPAs should “avoid or minimise any conflict” between the heritage asset’s conservation (which includes achieving its optimum viable use) and any aspect of a proposal.

Paragraph 210 requires local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable new uses and of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraphs 212 requires “great weight” to be given to an asset’s conservation “irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.”

Paragraph 213 advises that harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should require “clear and convincing justification”.

Paragraphs 213-215(214-216) require a balanced approach with any harm which would be caused being weighed against the potential public benefits which might be achieved.

Paragraph 220 advises that not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes

a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm or less than substantial harm as appropriate.

The 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 and non-designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance and encourages proposals which improve the condition of heritage assets at risk. Neighbourhood Plan Policy Policy TC4 – Development within Chippenham Conservation Area further supports these aspirations to preserve and enhance the Conservation Area.

The Council's Core Strategy CP 57: Ensuring high quality design requires a high quality of design in all new developments. The policy requires applicants to "demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through (amongst other things) responding to the value of the natural and historic environment and being sympathetic to and conserving historic buildings and landscapes. Development is required to respond positively to the existing in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting.

The building is identified as a Notable Building within the Chippenham Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2024), reflecting its positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Assessment

The applications relate to a Grade II listed building "Mortimores Weighbridge Office, Chippenham Station Yard". A building that is a historic remnant of commercial and industrial activities associated with Chippenham Railway Station. The site is situated adjacent to the railway station and its car park.

A weighbridge office was a building associated with a weighbridge, a large weighing mechanism used to weigh livestock, horse drawn carts and wagons. The office accommodated the clerk responsible for recording the weight of incoming and outgoing loads on and off the railway. Such buildings formed an important part of railway goods yards. The building therefore illustrates the historic operation of the railway and the commercial activities that developed around the station. Many weighbridges have been lost and so they are becoming increasingly rare.

The significance and special interest of the listed building derives from its aesthetic, historic (illustrative and associative), communal and evidential significance.

Architecturally and aesthetically, it retains its distinctive form, with a limestone rubble and timber-framed painted weatherboarded finish. It has moderate aesthetic (designed) significance.

Historically, the building illustrates associative evidence of the railway-related industrial development that contributed significantly to Chippenham's growth during the nineteenth

century. The Weighbridge has high historic significance and group value, together with other surviving weighbridges which are becoming rarer over time.

Its association with Rowland Brotherhood's engineering works, a firm involved in the construction of railway infrastructure across Wiltshire, and the surviving weighbridge scales demonstrates historic and moderate evidential value as a surviving element of the former station yard.

The building has moderate communal significance as a tangible reminder of Chippenham's railway and industrial heritage. Although no longer in its original use, it retains value for local residents and those with personal memories of the station yard and its former commercial activities.

The building makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Chippenham Conservation Area. Although relatively small in scale, it is a notable historic landmark within the station approach and serves as a reminder of the area's railway heritage. The asset's setting has been influenced by later twentieth-century development, extensive areas of hardstanding and modern transport infrastructure. Nevertheless, its location and close relationship with the station remains legible and contributes to an understanding of its historic function.

The proposal seeks the repair, refurbishment and continued occupation of the Grade II listed building through its conversion to a flexible commercial use. The building has been vacant for a considerable period and is currently deteriorating and in poor condition.

The proposed repair works and upgrades to the building are substantial due to the condition of the building. The initial construction of the building was not designed with consideration for thermal comfort. The proposals are for repair and to sensitively upgrade the building fabric to increase its sustainability and long-term use. The proposed works comprises:

Removal of:

- Contemporary partitions, timber panelling and fixtures/fittings.
- Concrete slab

Repair works:

- Timber repairs including trusses, valley gutter, timber frame, rafters, boarding, window and door frames.
- Stone repairs including piecing in new stone and repointing.
- Re-roofing, replacing lost roof tiles, replace missing gutters, downpipes and leadwork.

Alterations:

- Installing a new insulated limecrete floor.
- Insulating the timber frame external walls with thermafleece cosywool insulation.
- Applying lime hemp plaster to the solid walls.
- Re-roofing and insulating the roof with thermafleece.
- Screens to be refurbished.
- Drainage/pop-ups (future proofing for a potential tenant)
- Adaptations to the concrete plinth.

The external appearance will be improved and rejuvenated through repairs, whilst largely retaining the existing character. There are a few minor alterations including a ventilation grill and drainage. The building is deteriorating and the repair works are a significant benefit to the heritage asset's significance and wider Conservation Area. The existing door would be modified which would result in less than substantial harm, but this is minor and the form would remain in tact.

Internally, the removal of partitions will reduce the evidential value reducing the historic visibility of the spaces as a coal store and office. The Assessment of Significance statement provides a thorough assessment. Those identified to have high significance are proposed to be retained. Those which are lost are considered to result in less than substantial harm.

The loss of stone floor would result in less than substantial harm as it contributes to aesthetic and evidential values of the building. However, providing a useful accessible floor area will ensure the long-term use and viability of the building.

Thermal upgrades to the building are considered reversible and as a consequence would cause only minor harm to the existing historic fabric.

The proposed works are to be undertaken in accordance with the submitted Repair Methodology, which could be conditioned as part of the approved plans.

The weighbridge has been retained on the plans which has significant value.

Where less than substantial harm has been identified, this is weighed against the public benefits of the proposal which include repairs and refurbishment of the building, which supports the long term occupancy and ongoing maintenance of the building which is currently in a dilapidated condition.

The introduction of a new commercial use is considered compatible with the character of the building and would secure a viable and sustainable future for the asset. Paragraph 210 of the NPPF recognises the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. In this regard, the proposed use represents a heritage benefit, reducing the likelihood of further deterioration arising from vacancy and underuse.

In terms of setting, the building occupies a prominent position adjacent to Chippenham Railway Station. The historic station yard has been substantially altered through later development, however the relationship between the building and the railway environment remains visible. The proposed development would not materially alter this relationship. The retention and refurbishment of the building, together with improvements to its immediate surroundings, would maintain its visibility and legibility as a surviving historic feature within the station area.

The proposal would also preserve the building's contribution to the significance of the Chippenham Conservation Area. The re-use of a vacant listed building and the enhancement of its condition would have a positive effect on the character and appearance of this part of

the Conservation Area, particularly given the building's prominence within an important gateway location to the town. The Town Council have no objection to the conversion of the building, subject to some comments in relation to cycle provision and landscaping. The proposed works are considered to support Enhancement Proposal 6 of the Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan.

Conclusion

As previously set out, the proposals would result in a limited degree of less than substantial harm arising from a number of minor alterations to the listed building. In accordance with paragraph 215 of the NPPF, this harm has been weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. It is considered that the significant public benefits arising from the sensitive repair and refurbishment of the building, securing its return to viable use and long-term conservation, outweigh the identified harm.

Having regard to the statutory duties under Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, it is therefore considered that the proposals would preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building, preserve its setting, and preserve the character and appearance of the Chippenham Conservation Area. The proposals are consequently considered acceptable in heritage terms and accord with Chapter 16 of the NPPF and Core Policies CP57 and CP58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, and Policy TC4 of the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan.

Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

Policy Context

Core 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 proposed works comprise the repair and refurbishment of the existing building with limited alterations to its external appearance. The proposals retain the building's historic form, scale, and majority of materials, ensuring that it remains legible as a former railway weighbridge office. As such, the development would maintain the building's positive contribution to the character of the station area and the wider Chippenham Conservation Area.

The proposals are considered to respond positively to local character and distinctiveness and would not adversely affect the visual amenities of the surrounding area. The development is therefore consistent with the design objectives of Core Policy CP57.

Amenity

Policy Context

Core Policy 57 (Point vii) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to respect the amenity of existing occupants and ensure appropriate amenity levels for future residents.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly Paragraph 135, reinforces the need for development to provide a high standard of amenity for both existing and future users.

The proposal relates to the repair, refurbishment and re-use of the former weighbridge office and would not introduce any significant changes to the building's footprint, scale or massing. As such, the development would not give rise to unacceptable impacts in terms of overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of light, overshadowing, overbearing impact or enclosure.

Potential impacts relating to noise and disturbance associated with the proposed flexible Class E use have been considered separately within the Environmental Considerations section below. Subject to the recommended conditions, it is considered that the proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to the amenities of neighbouring occupiers and would provide an acceptable level of amenity for future users.

The proposal therefore accords with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

Environmental Considerations (Noise, Air Quality, Contaminated Land, etc.)

Policy Context

Core Policies 55 and 56 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy require:

- Development proposals to avoid unacceptable environmental impacts.
- To provide appropriate mitigation where risks are identified.

The application seeks the repair, refurbishment and re-use of the existing weighbridge office. Given the nature and scale of the proposal, no concerns have been identified in relation to air quality or contaminated land.

Wiltshire Council's Public Protection team have been consulted and raise no objection subject to conditions. It is noted that the proposed flexible Class E use could accommodate a range of activities, some of which have the potential to generate noise and disturbance through customer activity, plant and equipment, deliveries, and extended hours of operation. Given the proximity of residential properties on Union Road and Old Road, it is considered reasonable and necessary to impose the environmental protection officers suggested condition on hours of operation and deliveries.

This will go some significant way to addressing any potential harm noting that background levels during the day and evening will likely be relatively high in this central location. Activity here will be notable generally with traffic and public transport users but also from nearby commercial activity such as B&M and Tesco. Background noise is likely to be less during the night-time, but the hours of operation restrict potential disturbance from the premises then regardless of what type of Class E use takes place.

Furthermore, it is noted that this is a listed building and so both planning and listed building controls would likely be necessary in the event of external plant, ventilation etc being required. Any such application could then be reviewed on its merits at such time. This retains significant control for the local planning authority, mitigating the public protection concerns.

It is also important to consider that a condition to require further noise assessment would add a potential cost to and time constraint on any future occupier and potentially limit the ability to secure a new occupier in the building. This would run contrary to the previously discussed public benefit of securing the optimum viable use of a designated heritage asset. It would also run contrary to the government's intention to have more flexibility in uses to help incentivise economic elements of sustainable development.

As such, it is considered such a condition is neither necessary or reasonable. Even if this were argued to be acceptable in these regards the public protection suggested wording is not precise around what end users would need to make a noise assessment submission, and those that would not have to. It is important to consider that movement within Class E is not to be taken as development of land.

Finally, it is noted that there are no public objections.

Subject to the recommended conditions, it is considered that any potential impacts associated with noise and disturbance can be satisfactorily mitigated and that the proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to the amenities of neighbouring occupiers, and complies with Core Policies 55 and 56 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, together with the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

Highways Impacts and Parking

Policy Context

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.

Proposals must also ensure safe access for refuse collection vehicles and comply with the Wiltshire Council Waste Storage and Collection SPD (2017).

The application proposes the refurbishment and re-use of the existing weighbridge office for a flexible Class E use. The site is located within an existing station car park and benefits from

a highly sustainable location adjacent to Chippenham Railway Station and within easy walking and cycling distance of the town centre and other local services.

Wiltshire Council Highways officers have been consulted and raise no objection to the proposal. It is noted that no alterations are proposed to the existing access arrangements and that the development would not have a severe impact on the operation or safety of the local highway network. The proposal includes two vehicle parking spaces, which is within the Council's adopted maximum parking standards and is considered acceptable.

The Chippenham Cycle Network Development Group and Chippenham Town Council raised concerns regarding cycle parking provision and the lack of shower/changing facilities and the Highway Engineer requested details of this by condition. The applicant since submitted a plan to show that cycle parking can be accommodated within the building and, given the modest scale of the development and its highly accessible location, it is considered that adequate cycle parking provision can be achieved. Whilst no details of shower or changing facilities have been provided, it is not considered that the absence of such facilities would justify withholding planning permission in this case. This suggested condition is therefore no longer required.

Concerns have also been raised regarding potential highway safety impacts associated with the nearby station junction. However, no objection has been received from the Highway Authority, who are satisfied that the proposal would not result in a severe residual cumulative impact on the highway network. Significant increases in vehicle movements are not anticipated having regard to the scale of the building and its existing lawful use.

Network Rail has requested additional information regarding the carrying out of works adjacent to railway land. These matters relate primarily to the implementation of the development and operational requirements of Network Rail rather than matters that warrant refusal of the application. The applicant's attention is drawn to the need to engage with Network Rail and obtain any necessary consents separately from the planning process.

Having regard to the consultation responses received, it is considered that the proposal would provide acceptable access and parking arrangements and would not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the operation of the surrounding highway network. The development therefore accords with Core Policies 60 and 61 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

Ecology and Biodiversity

Policy Context

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.

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)

An Ecological Impact Assessment prepared by Ethos (December 2025) has been submitted in support of the application.

A Preliminary Roost Assessment identified several features with the potential to support roosting bats and initially assessed the building as having moderate bat roost potential. A subsequent emergence survey undertaken in August 2025 recorded no evidence of bats roosting within the building and no significant commuting or foraging activity in the immediate vicinity. The survey also noted high levels of artificial lighting around the building, reducing its suitability for bats. As a result, the building's bat roost potential was downgraded to low and no further surveys were considered necessary in accordance with best practice guidance. The submitted assessment concludes that the proposed works are unlikely to adversely affect bats and the Council's Ecologist raises no objection in this regard.

The survey identified gaps and features capable of providing nesting opportunities for birds. Whilst no active nests were identified, all wild birds, their nests, eggs and dependent young are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Any works affecting potential nesting habitat should therefore avoid the bird nesting season where possible, or be preceded by appropriate checks to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation.

The submitted assessment concludes that the proposal is unlikely to affect any other protected species and no evidence has been provided to indicate otherwise.

The Council's Ecologist notes that biodiversity enhancements, such as bird nesting features, invertebrate habitats or wildlife-friendly planting, would be welcomed in accordance with Core Policy 50 and the NPPF. However, given the limited nature of the proposals, the absence of identified ecological impacts and the fact that the development falls below the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain de minimis threshold, it is not considered necessary or reasonable to secure such measures by condition in this instance. That said, there are two bug hotels proposed on the elevations.

The Council's Ecologist further advises that the proposal is exempt from the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements as it does not impact any priority habitat and affects less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat with biodiversity value greater than zero.

The Council's Ecologist raises no objection to the proposal. The development is not considered likely to result in adverse impacts on protected species or biodiversity interests and is therefore considered to accord with Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant provisions of the NPPF. Biodiversity enhancements would be welcomed in the where practicable. The grass landscaping area would be the obvious choice for this.

Other Issues

The site lies within Flood Zone 1, which is defined as having the lowest probability of flooding. The proposal relates to the refurbishment and re-use of an existing building and does not involve any significant increase in built form or areas of hardstanding. Foul drainage is proposed to connect to the existing mains sewer. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not give rise to unacceptable drainage or flood risk impacts.

Network Rail have been consulted and raise no objection in principle to the proposed development. It is noted that further information has been requested regarding construction methodology and drainage arrangements to ensure that the proposed works do not adversely affect Network Rail land or station operations. However, these matters are considered to relate principally to separate legal, operational and land ownership issues between the applicant and Network Rail, rather than the planning merits of the proposal. No specific planning harm has been identified and no objection has been raised to the development in principle. The applicant is advised to engage with Network Rail and secure any necessary approvals or agreements prior to the commencement of works.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Planning law requires that applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The application proposes the repair, refurbishment and re-use of a long-vacant Grade II listed building within the settlement boundary of Chippenham, a Principal Settlement where sustainable development is supported in principle. The proposal would bring the building back into productive use through a flexible Class E use, supporting economic activity within a highly accessible location adjacent to Chippenham Railway Station.

The proposal has been assessed against the relevant provisions of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan and the NPPF. It is considered acceptable in principle and would preserve the character and appearance of the area. Subject to the recommended conditions, the proposal would not result in unacceptable impacts upon neighbouring amenity, highway safety, ecology, biodiversity, flood risk, drainage or other environmental matters.

With regard to heritage matters, the proposals would result in a limited degree of less than substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II listed building arising from certain internal alterations and works to the historic fabric. In accordance with paragraph 215 of the NPPF, this harm has been weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Significant weight is afforded to the public benefits arising from the sensitive repair, refurbishment and viable re-use of the building, securing its long-term conservation and reducing the risk of further deterioration through vacancy and neglect. The proposal would also preserve the building's

contribution to the character and appearance of the Chippenham Conservation Area and supports Enhancement Proposal 6 of the Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan.

Having regard to the statutory duties under Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and for the reasons set out throughout this report, it is concluded that the public benefits of the development outweigh the identified less than substantial harm and that the proposal complies with the relevant provisions of the development plan when read as a whole.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered to represent sustainable development and is recommended for approval subject to the conditions set out below.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Location Plan, received 27/02/26

Block Plan, Floor Plans, Roof Plan & Sections 0010 J, received 08/04/26

Proposed Elevations 0011 B, received 27/02/26

Repair Methodology, received 27/02/26

Section 6 of Ecological Impact Assessment, Ethos, December 2025, received 27/02/26

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt, in the interests of proper planning and for the protection, mitigation and enhancement of biodiversity.

3. The premises shall not be open to customers nor shall any external activities, including deliveries or waste collection, take place outside the hours of:

08:00 to 22:00 Monday to Saturday

09:00 to 20:00 Sundays and Bank Holidays

REASON: Core policy 57, Ensuring high design and place shaping such that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable.

INFORMATIVE TO APPLICANT:

The application involves works which may affect the public highway. The consent hereby granted shall not be construed as authority to carry out works on the highway. The applicant is advised that a licence will be required from Wiltshire's Highway Authority before any works are carried out on any footway, footpath, carriageway, verge or other land forming part of the highway. Please contact our Streetworks Team at streetworks@wiltshire.gov.uk or by phoning 01225 713 497 or visit their website at <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/highways-roadworks-permit-scheme> to make an application.

INFORMATIVE TO APPLICANT:

The applicant is requested to note that this permission does not affect any private property rights and therefore does not authorise the carrying out of any work on land outside their control. If such works are required it will be necessary for the applicant to obtain the landowners consent before such works commence.

If you intend carrying out works in the vicinity of the site boundary, you are also advised that it may be expedient to seek your own advice with regard to the requirements of the Party Wall Act 1996.

INFORMATIVE TO APPLICANT:

Any alterations to the approved plans, brought about by compliance with Building Regulations or any other reason must first be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority before commencement of work.

INFORMATIVE TO APPLICANT:

The applicant is advised that the granting of planning permission does not convey any approval to carry out works on, over, under or adjacent to Network Rail land. Separate consents, licences or agreements may be required from Network Rail before any works commence. The applicant should contact Network Rail at an early stage to discuss the proposed development and any requirements relating to construction, drainage, access or works affecting railway operations.

INFORMATIVE TO APPLICANT:

All wild birds, their nests, eggs and dependent young are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). No works likely to disturb nesting birds should take place during the main bird nesting season (March to August inclusive) unless a suitably qualified ecologist has confirmed that no active nests are present.

RECOMMENDATION:

That LISTED BUILDING CONSENT be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

1. The works for which Listed Building Consent is hereby granted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Location Plan, received 27/02/26

Block Plan, Floor Plans, Roof Plan & Sections 0010 J, received 08/04/26

Proposed Elevations 0011 B, received 27/02/26

Repair Methodology, received 27/02/26

Section 6 of Ecological Impact Assessment, Ethos, December 2025, received 27/02/26

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt, in the interests of proper planning and for the protection, mitigation and enhancement of biodiversity.

3. All repairs shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Repair Methodology (received 27/02/26) and shall utilise matching materials and traditional techniques unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of preserving the character and appearance of the listed building, its setting and the Conservation Area.