

HERITAGE STATEMENT

Rear Courtyard, Outdoor Seating and Mobile Catering Trailer
The Pour House, 28A St John's Street, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 1BN

1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement is submitted in support of a planning application relating to the rear courtyard of The Pour House, 28A St John's Street, Devizes. It assesses the effect of the proposed development, comprising the regularisation of existing ancillary outdoor customer seating and the siting and future operation of a mobile catering trailer, on the significance of the designated heritage assets affecting the site: the Grade II listed building at 28A St John's Street and its setting, and the character and appearance of the Devizes Conservation Area.

This statement has been prepared with reference to Wiltshire Council's own assessment of the site, recorded in the Case Officer's Report for application PL/2023/04622 (29 August 2023), which confirms: "The building is Grade II listed and in the setting of listed buildings. The building is also situated within the Devizes Conservation Area."

2. Legislative and Policy Framework

- Sections 16, 66 and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which require special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building, its setting, and any features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses, and special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- National Planning Policy Framework, Chapter 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment), which requires that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, and that great weight be given to an asset's conservation.
- Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015), Core Policy 57 (Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping), which seeks high-quality, well-designed development that responds positively to local context, including heritage assets.
- The Devizes Conservation Area designation, within which the application site falls.

3. The Heritage Assets

3.1 The listed building

The application property, 28A St John's Street, comprises two distinct parts. The front part, facing St John's Street, is understood to be the former coach house associated with the adjoining District Club, which is separately designated as a Grade II listed building (List Entry Number 1252311, first listed 9 April 1954, statutory address 'District Club, St John's Street'). The Club is addressed as 27 St John's Street, while the coach house has its own separate access and is addressed as 28A; the two are not in common occupation or use today.

Although the coach house is not separately named in the statutory address of the list entry, its front part was constructed as part of the same building as the Club. Section 1(5)(a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 extends listed status to any object or structure fixed to a listed building, and on this basis this front part forms part of the designated heritage asset, notwithstanding its separate current access, numbering and use. This is consistent with the Local Planning Authority's own position, recorded in its 2023 assessment of the site, that 'the building is Grade II listed.'

The rear part of the property, through which customers pass to reach the courtyard, is a later, modern structure, understood to have been built to enclose what was previously an open covered way or archway. This is directly corroborated by the Local Planning Authority's own Case Officer's Report for the 2013 listed building consent (13/01598/LBC), which describes the works then approved as including 'the removal of a modern partition to create a larger area to the rear of the building', works to which the Council's Conservation Officer raised no

objection, having found that the proposal would have 'a minimal effect on the character, setting and historic fabric of the building' owing to there being 'no material change to the layout of the building.' This confirms that the rear part of the property was already recognised by the Local Planning Authority's own Conservation Officer, over a decade ago, as being of modern character, distinct from the historic fabric of the coach house and the Club. This is also consistent with the site's earlier planning history, which records 1988 consents for a doorway and surround to the rear of an archway (K/11735/L), a shopfront to the rear of an archway (K/11736), and the use of a covered way as a shop (K/11737). This rear structure was granted its own separate planning permission, post-dates the historic fabric of the coach house and the Club, and is not understood to form part of the designated heritage asset; the significance of the listed building is not experienced or appreciated through it.

The rear courtyard which is the subject of this application sits beyond this later, unlisted structure, physically and visually separated from the listed fabric of the coach house and the Club by an intervening modern structure that itself received planning permission, at a material distance from the listed part of the building.

3.2 The Devizes Conservation Area

The application site lies within the Devizes Conservation Area, designated in recognition of the town's historic market town character, its fine grain of historic buildings, streets and yards, and the relationship between the town centre, the castle mound and the surrounding historic street pattern. The significance of the conservation area in this location derives from the continuous historic street frontage of St John's Street, the proximity to the Town Hall, and the survival of historic plot patterns, including rear yards and covered ways of the kind found at this site.

4. Description of the Proposal

The proposal comprises two elements, both located to the rear of the listed building, within an existing enclosed private courtyard:

- Regularisation of existing outdoor customer seating, comprising two tables and four benches, installed on 22 May 2026, using entirely movable and unattached furniture with no permanent building work, for use exclusively by customers of The Pour House;
- Permission for the siting and operation of a mobile, wheeled catering trailer, unattached and not fixed to the ground, present on site since 2 July 2026 but not currently in use, intended for the preparation and service of food exclusively to customers of The Pour House on a limited basis; it is not, and is not intended to become, a separate business.

No works are proposed to the fabric of the listed building. No excavation, foundation work or fixing to the building or to any historic boundary wall is proposed. Both elements of the proposal are freestanding and readily removable.

The trailer is clad in varnished timber, with a traditional, tidy appearance selected to be visually sympathetic to the historic character of the site, rather than a modern or brightly branded catering unit.

Prior to the applicant taking on the lease, the rear yard had been used by previous occupiers as an informal dumping ground for rubbish, discarded equipment, wood and other waste materials, alongside informal use for parking. With the consent of her landlord, the applicant cleared, tidied and improved the area, removing accumulated waste and introducing movable planters, before the seating was introduced. This clearance involved the removal of loose rubbish, discarded equipment and waste materials only; no demolition, structural alteration, or building or renovation works of any kind were carried out to any structure, wall or surface as part of this clearance.

The applicant has also actively maintained the mature trees within the courtyard and selected the trailer's position specifically to preserve the trees, their canopy and foliage intact, providing additional natural screening. No felling, topping or lopping of any tree has been carried out or is proposed; the statutory notification requirement under section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for works to trees within a conservation area is therefore not engaged.

5. Assessment of Effect on Significance and Setting

5.1 Effect on the listed building and its setting

The front elevation of the coach house is read as a modest, subsidiary component alongside the taller principal elevation of the Club, with its own separate stepped entrance, distinct from the Club's own entrance further along St John's Street. It is this shared street frontage, and the visual and physical relationship between the coach house and the Club at the front of the site, through which the designated asset's significance is principally experienced by the public.

The rear courtyard, by contrast, is enclosed by boundary walls, fencing, parked vehicles, mature trees and vegetation, and is entirely separate from this shared street frontage. It is also physically and visually separated from the listed fabric itself by the later, unlisted rear structure described in section 3.1 above, which was built under its own separate planning permission to enclose what had been an open covered way. Any historic functional relationship between the coach house and the yard, such as coach access, turning or stabling, was therefore already altered by that later, lawful development, well before the introduction of the current seating and trailer. The seating and trailer are not visible from St John's Street, from the entrance to either the coach house or the Club, or from any point at which the designated asset is experienced by the public. Customer access to the courtyard is via The Pour House itself, not via any car park; the courtyard is screened from the neighbouring private car park belonging to Awdry Law by a large tree, and while a small footway links that car park to the courtyard, it is a private route, not open to the public or to customers.

No physical alteration is proposed to the historic fabric of the coach house or the Club, to the archway, the covered way, or to any other structure that could be considered a curtilage feature predating 1 July 1948. The seating furniture, planters and trailer are modern, movable items with no historic or architectural connection to the building's fabric, and are readily reversible.

On this basis, it is concluded that the proposal preserves the coach house and the Club, and their shared setting, and causes no harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset.

No groundworks or below-ground excavation are proposed as part of this application; the seating furniture and the trailer both sit on the courtyard's existing hardstanding without any foundation or fixing works. No archaeological assessment has previously been required for comparable works at this site, and given the absence of any groundworks here, it is not considered that the proposal engages any archaeological potential that the site may have.

5.2 Effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area

The proposal makes use of an existing enclosed rear yard, screened from public view, and does not alter the historic street frontage, plot boundaries or public realm that contribute most directly to the character and appearance of the conservation area at this location. The scale of the seating area is modest, limited to two tables and four benches, and the catering trailer is a single, wheeled unit rather than a permanent structure. Neither element is visible from any publicly accessible viewpoint within the conservation area.

This approach is consistent with the Local Planning Authority's own conclusion when assessing changes at this address in 2023, when it found that comparable changes would have "no impact upon the heritage assets and their settings." The current proposal, being similarly modest in scale and entirely screened from public view, is considered to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.

More than this, the applicant's clearance of accumulated rubbish, discarded equipment and waste from the yard, and its replacement with seating, planting and screening, represents a positive and visible improvement to a previously neglected part of the site. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area; the works carried out by the applicant are considered to enhance, rather than merely preserve, the appearance of this part of the designated area.

6. Conclusion

The proposed regularisation of the courtyard seating and the future use of the mobile catering trailer would preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building and its setting, and would

preserve, and in the case of the yard's improved appearance enhance, the character and appearance of the Devizes Conservation Area. No harm to the significance of either designated heritage asset has been identified. The proposal is considered to accord with sections 16, 66 and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy. The applicant respectfully requests that the Local Planning Authority reach the same conclusion in its determination of this application.