



Design and Access Statement

The Shambles
SN15 3HL

July 2026

Introduction

The project focuses on improving the public realm around Yelde Hall, a medieval, timber framed, Grade I listed building located in the heart of Chippenham's marketplace. Positioned within the town's conservation area and forming part of a wider ensemble of historic buildings, the space plays an important civic and heritage role.

Over time, incremental alterations have left the area visually cluttered, inconsistently surfaced, and unreflective of Yelde Hall's significance. This proposal seeks to restore clarity and character to this underused space.

A key element of the scheme, a multi-use planter, introduces greenery into the area which is heavily constrained by underground utilities; increasing ecological value and designing a vibrant space for visitors to the Hall which is remote from the main adjacent road network.

Proposed Works

Due to budgetary restrictions it is proposed to stage the works with the main re-paving forming a second stage as budget allows.

Stage 1:

1. Introduction of a multi-functional planter combining green space with various street furniture elements and the biodiversity artistic features.
2. As part of this work, we would plant a large standard tree (ideally reclaimed from the existing planters on site). Sited outside of network exclusion areas this would also require the installation of a subterranean root director system (as specified) to guide tree roots away from underground utilities and protect existing infrastructure.
3. Clearing of existing drainage which has become silted up
4. A small bin store is proposed to house the bins outside The Waverley.
5. Bike stands.
6. A series of three benches and 4 light posts to the space behind the Yelde Hall.
7. Works to improve the appearance of the rear fenestration of The Shambles buildings including repainting of woodwork and potential temporary artworks to shuttered windows/doors (separate listed building consents would be submitted if required)
8. Portions of infill concrete paving and tarmac replaced with york stone in The Shambles.

Stage 2:

1. Resurfacing of the entire area with york stone paving for a coherent, high-quality public realm around the historic building.

Pre-Application Advice

- Guidance from Wiltshire Council Highways asked us to look at vehicle site lines, tree root containment and remove hoggin as a proposed surface.
- Wiltshire Council Conservation Officer was generally supportive although had some concerns regarding the scale and colour of an originally proposed public art sculpture. A tree was removed from the design which was considered too close to the historic asset and it was felt could impact its long-term preservation.
- The potential for the parkette to hold a work of public art was explored with Wiltshire Council's Public Arts Officer and may be added at a later date as a separate entity after public consultation.
- Chippenham Town Council CCTV – we checked to ensure sight lines were maintained of the front of the Yelde Hall and down The Shambles with the proposed tree.
- Responding to comments from the Wiltshire Council Urban Design Officer and the President of Chippenham Civic Society, we were encouraged to add a bench to specifically allow people to sit and enjoy the view of St. Andrew's Church which is noted in the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan and Chippenham Conservation Area Character Appraisal as a building of historic importance.

Design

This proposal aims to create a vibrant setting for residents, visitors and events while preserving the historical value of Yelde Hall and its setting.

The addition of the multi-functional planter/seating forms a key element of the public realm improvements, framing the south-eastern elevation of Yelde Hall and isolating it from the perceived danger of the road network. A carefully selected tree will be planted with raised crown to maintain unobstructed views beneath the canopy. The planter integrates greenery and seating within a single coordinated structure; reducing clutter and improving usability. This also provides a suitable alternative to in-ground planting in an area constrained by numerous underground utilities. By integrating planting and shade, the design enhances ecological and climate resilience while softening the hard landscaping and improving comfort for users.

Appearance & Materiality

The material choices are rooted in the need to respect the heritage and significance of the Yelde Hall, while delivering a durable and attractive public realm. The primary re-surface material – York stone - has been selected to provide a natural, historically sympathetic finish that compliments the structures façade. It's warm tone and textured surface reinforces the building's architectural presence and elevates the quality of the surrounding space.

The planter, constructed from a sinuous metal bench painted in an Oxide Red and stacked stone wall, balances longevity and robustness while maintaining a contemporary and playful yet sensitive aesthetic.

New landscaping will include a fastigate tree species and native species of drought resistant flora, introducing seasonal variation without obstructing key views. Together these materials create a harmonious palette that aims to restore natural character and promote ecological connectivity. It will also slow surface water run off from the hard surface.



Proposed Site Plan Render

Conservation and Ecology Impact

This proposal reflects a careful balance between privacy, conservation and ecological enhancement.

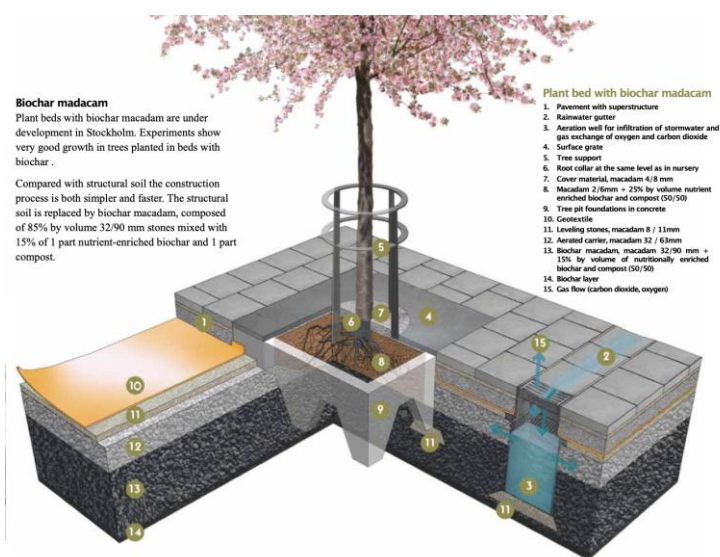
Light and noise control play a vital role in shaping how people experience the area. Upgrading surface materials, improving lighting quality, while maintaining natural surveillance, aid in creating a safer, more comfortable environment without compromising pedestrian movement. Introduction of planters and greenery softens the hard edges of the streetscape and helps buffer noise from the adjacent road.

Great consideration has been given toward the impact of the town's conservation area, neighbourhood plan and the listed buildings on the site and adjacent. The design respects the sensitivity of the setting while delivering modern functionality. By doing so it creates visual interest without enclosing spaces in ways that may encourage misuse. The lock-up window at the Yelde Hall is a particularly important feature that the proposal aims to preserve. Equally, the key sightline from The Shambles to the war memorial and to St.

Andrew's Church will remain open, forming the towns visual and cultural identity. These heritage considerations ensure that improvements enhance rather than overshadow the historic character of the area.

Ecological and landscape enhancements offer opportunities to improve both environmental performance and user experience. The tree provides much-needed shade, while maintaining views beneath the canopy. Additional greenery in the multi-functional planter, will boost biodiversity and create a welcoming atmosphere. The proposal includes a potential for small-scale water management features, such as infiltration zones or water gardens, to help reduce surface runoff. Modest ecological interventions can contribute locally to improved air quality and climate resilience.

Construction impacts will be managed with equal care. Protecting existing heritage structures, minimising disruption to local ecology, and maintaining safe pedestrian movement are all essential. Thoughtful phasing, and sensitive handling of materials will help ensure that the construction process aligns with the long-term goals of conservation and environmental enhancement.



Access

The primary access points and parking will remain unaltered; however, the design will greatly improve circulation. Clearer pedestrian routes will guide users through the space. At present, the site has a bleak, sporadic arrangement of planters, bollards and lamp posts. The proposal aims to simplify this into a single unified area.



Image of the existing cluttered landscape

Conclusion

The main intentions of the proposed scheme are to enhance and reconfigure the site layout by introducing increased urban greening, a multi-functional planter, new paving and various elements of street furniture.

These improvements are designed to enrich visitors everyday experience by transforming the previously bleak and fragmented area into a coherent, welcoming and environmentally beneficial public space. When coupled with the integration of modern materials and considered planting, these works will strengthen the connection between the Yelde Hall and its surroundings.

Overall, the scheme delivers a balanced and well-integrated design that enhances the site's functionality, increases green space, and maintains local heritage.