

PLANNING STATEMENT

Public Realm Works Yelde Hall, Chippenham



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared to accompany an application for planning permission for public realm works adjacent to the Yelde Hall, Chippenham.
- 1.2 Chippenham Town Council has been awarded funding from the Wiltshire Town's Programme (WTP) for 2025 and 2026 to support activity on the high street. The Town Council has determined that it will use £50k of WTP funding on the proposed public realm works, which would help to fulfill Town Centre Objective 3 of the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan: *'Identify sites within the town centre which could be developed/enhanced to increase the attractiveness of the public realm.'*
- 1.3 The Town Council determined that the public realm around the Yelde Hall is of a size and scale that would be compatible with delivering a scheme that could meet the available budget. In addition, the current poor state of the public space does not showcase the Grade I listed Yelde Hall to best effect (or surrounding listed buildings). Neither does it currently provide external space which complements the Yelde Hall's functions.
- 1.4 The potential of this public space has not been fully realised and the proposed scheme has the potential to transform it into an attractive and vibrant public space for the benefit of people of all ages and abilities, visitors, and those who live and work in the town.

2. Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site is on Wiltshire Council Highways land. It forms part of the historic market place in Chippenham and covers the area located immediately around the Grade I Listed Yelde Hall.
- 2.2 The Yelde Hall hosts a variety of events including theatre, craft & vintage fairs, community music/dance, book signings/readings, community art, walks & talks, celebrations and tourism.
- 2.3 Other listed buildings that immediately adjoin the site are the Grade II Listed: Nos. 54 & 55 Market Place and Nos. 62 & 63 Market Place.
- 2.4 A map showing the location of the listed buildings described above is provided in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.5 The listing descriptions of the Yelde Hall and these listed buildings immediately adjoining the site are provided in **Appendix 2**.
- 2.6 Other Grade II listed buildings in the vicinity of the site, which the scheme has the potential to affect the setting of, are Nos. 38 & 39 Market Place and the War Memorial.

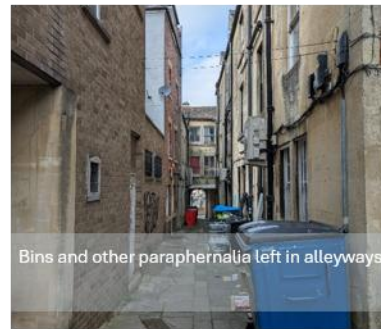
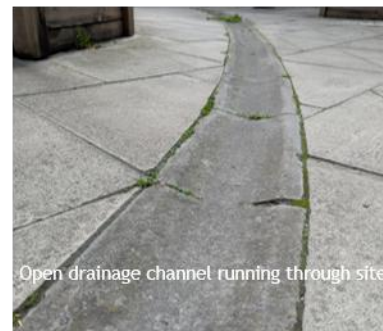
3. Issues, Opportunities and Objectives

3.1 The following issues and constraints exist on the site:

- A multitude of underground services - including a foul sewer and water main, low pressure gas pipe, Openreach and electric cables
- Space in front of the Yelde Hall feels bleak and empty with a tall street light column and randomly placed tree planters obscuring views of the front of the listed building from the south. A mixture of black painted bollards and inappropriate concrete planters are sited alongside the kerb, presumably to prevent vehicles mounting the pavement. There is no reason to linger in this space, with no seating opportunities
- Existing concrete paving slabs are not sympathetic to the setting of listed buildings and historic environment
- Curved open drainage channel running through site
- Bins on display visually detract from the space. There is no bin storage for Nos. 62 & 63 Market Place, nor those businesses which front The Shambles and Market Place and who use The Shambles alleyways to store bins
- The Shambles alleyways, leading directly to the site from the High Street (underneath No. 71 Market Place), has a 'back of house' feel. It is cluttered with bins and there is poor natural surveillance. It neither feels like an attractive nor safe route for pedestrians to use



Google Streetview Jul 2024 - Lighting column and tree planters spoil views of Yelde Hall



3.2 The following opportunities are presented as part of the proposal:

- The Yelde Hall hosts a variety of events and its doors open outwards on to the site. There are opportunities for people to spill out on to the site/use the space in front of the building
- Enhance the setting of the Yelde Hall by removing clutter
- Opportunities for integrated seating/planters/bin storage
- Adding soft landscaping (planters) to soften views and provide climate and ecological benefits
- Potential to retain or relocate some of the natural stone paving already present in the alleyways

3.3 Given the above, Artel 31 were tasked with designing a scheme to meet the following objectives:

- Improve the setting of, and longer distance views of, the Yelde Hall
- Resurface the site, or parts of it, in natural stone (preferably York stone)
- Improve soft landscaping on the site e.g. planters which could be integrated with seating or bin storage

- Maintain (and possibly improve) the pedestrian experience through The Shambles alleways
- A design that incorporates the use of high quality materials and landscape design, which are sympathetic to the historic environment
- A cohesive design that may be deliverable in phases
- A design that would be compatible with the parameters plan for public realm improvements in the Upper Market Place as set out in Policy TC3 of the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan and in the Chippenham One Plan

4. **Relevant Planning Policies**

National Policy and Guidance

- 4.1 Under Section 16 of the **Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** there is a requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing listed buildings or their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Under Section 72 of the Act there is also a requirement to pay special attention to the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- 4.2 The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** sets out the government's planning approach to the historic environment at Chapter 16. **Paragraphs 212-213** require a balanced approach with any harm which would be caused being weighed against the potential public benefits which might be achieved.
- 4.3 **Paragraph 210** requires local planning authorities to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 4.4 **Paragraph 215** requires that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 4.5 **Paragraphs 163 and 164** explain that the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change should also be considered in preparing and assessing planning applications, taking into account the full range of potential climate change impacts and that new development should help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design.

Development Plan Policies

Wiltshire Core Strategy (2016):

- 4.6 **Core Policy 57** (Ensuring high quality design and place shaping) requires a high standard of design in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality.
- 4.7 **Core Policy 58** (Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment) requires that *‘designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance.’*
- 4.8 **Core Policy 50** (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) states that all development should seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity.

Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan (2024):

- 4.9 **Policy TC4** (Development in Chippenham Conservation Area) requires that full regard be given to the relevant character area analysis in the **Chippenham Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2024)**, and that development within the Conservation Area will be permitted where it preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the Conservation Area amongst other things.
- 4.10 The Yelde Hall and its surroundings is described in the **Chippenham Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2024)** on the following pages:

p. 143 (our underlining for emphasis)

‘Opposite No. 41-43 is the Yelde Hall, one of the oldest buildings in the town and one of only two Grade I listed buildings in the town. A major restoration was carried out some years ago, which has seen repairs and restoration to the panelling, timber and roof, and a new set of oak doors to the entrance. Further enhancements have recently been carried out. The building has seen many uses since its original purpose as the first town hall including an armoury, fire station and town museum. It is now used as a space for community and historic events, linked to the museum. The restoration has transformed the appearance of the building and it now resembles, as close as is possible, its original appearance. Its setting is compromised to a degree by the untidy rear elevations of some of The Shambles buildings, the bland expanse of concrete paving in front of the building, roundabout junction and service lay-by.’

p. 148:

‘To the rear of The Shambles buildings is a small network of pedestrian alleys providing short cuts across the Market Place although the quality of surfacing is poor. These are generally rear elevations, but also provide the backdrop to the restored Yelde Hall. They are generally unappealing elevations with pipes, drain

gulleys and other clutter. These features bear testimony to the unmodernised combined drainage systems below.'

- 4.11 A map in the Conservation Area Appraisal denotes positive and negative views in the area, as well as buildings of good or poor townscape merit. The map is attached at **Appendix 3**.
- 4.12 Whilst the site is not specifically referred to in the Wiltshire Local Plan, Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan nor the Chippenham One Plan. **Policy TC3** of the Neighbourhood Plan includes a parameters plan which seeks to provide public realm improvements to the Upper Market Place, which adjoins the site. This is also a project that is listed for delivery in the Chippenham One Plan (albeit potentially to include a wider area) although there are no timescales identified for delivery of this project.
- 4.13 **Policy GI1** requires development proposals to include provision for the protection, enhancement and maintenance of wildlife habitat and biodiversity.

Supplementary Planning Document:

- 4.14 The **Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan SPD (2010)** drew on the earlier character appraisal (2007) and sets out a number of development guidelines, the following of which are relevant:
- '1. Any new development should not be detrimental to the positive views identified in the character analysis*
- 2. New development should seek, where possible, to eliminate or reduce the effect of the negative views identified in the character analysis.*
- 3. Any new development should take proper account of the archaeological potential of the area.'*
- 4.15 The Management Plan also sets out a number of enhancement proposals. Those relevant to the site are (our underlining for emphasis):
- '4. Any enhancement scheme for the post office area should seek the removal of the roundabout, narrowing of the vehicular entrance to the High Street, removal and rationalisation of highway infrastructure and removal of level changes to the carriageway. In addition, improvements to the quality of surface materials and the widening of the footpaths to improve the environment and reinforce the identity as an urban space would lead to an enhancement to the setting of Yelde Hall. This would also contribute towards integrating the area as a whole.*
- 5. In addition to the above, investigate and analyse the setting of Yelde Hall, in particular the alleys to the rear of the Shambles and associated rear elevations. Look to improve the setting of Yelde Hall by improving the current condition of materials, state of repair and maintenance of surroundings.'*

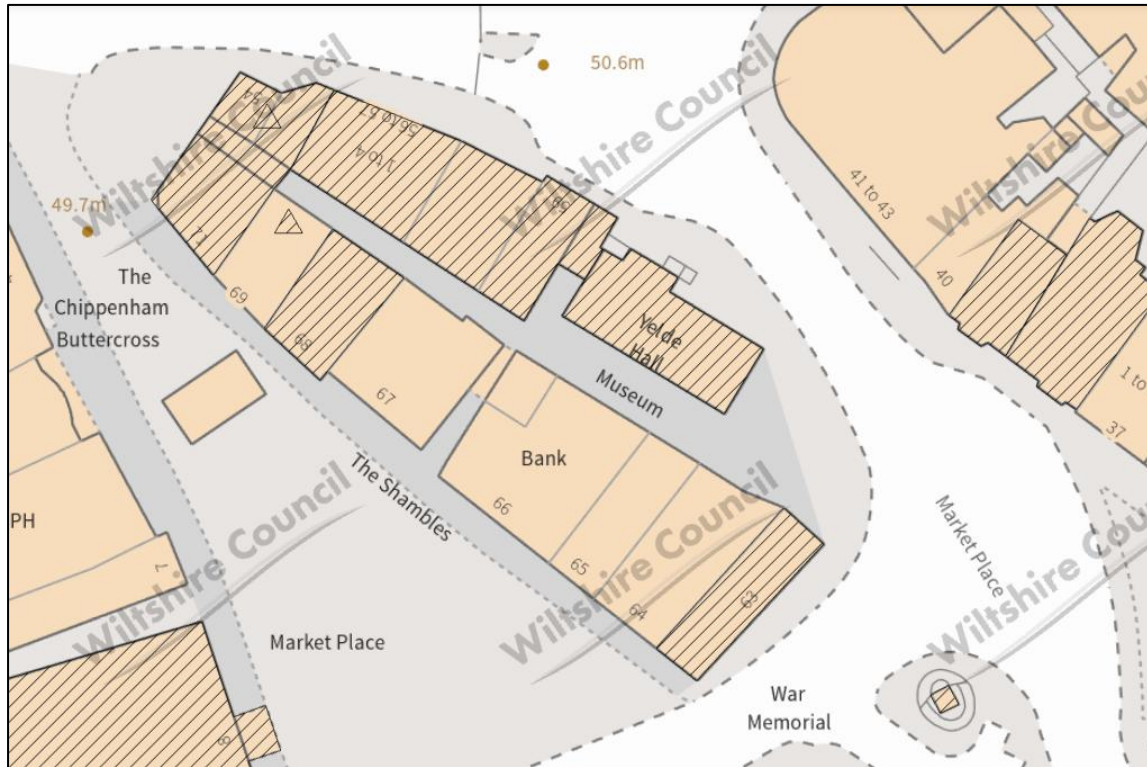
5. Assessment

- 5.1 As explained previously, the space in front of the Yelde Hall has a bleak, empty feel with inappropriately sited trees and planters obscuring views of the Yelde Hall and inappropriate materials such as concrete paving and concrete planters. The proposed development, in particular elements such as the proposed re-paving with a higher quality natural material, addition of soft landscaping and sympathetic lighting, would accord with the **Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** and **NPPF Paragraph 210, CP57 and CP58** of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Neighbourhood Plan **Policy TC4** by enhancing the setting of the listed Yelde Hall and surrounding listed buildings and making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of Chippenham Conservation Area.
- 5.2 The proposal would seek to rectify the compromised setting of the space in relation to the Conservation Area as described in **the Chippenham Conservation Area Character Appraisal**. It would not obscure or harm any of the key views identified in the Appraisal, and would comply with the **Chippenham Conservation Area Management Plan SPD** development guidelines and enhancement proposals for this area which seek to improve the environment and reinforce its identity as an urban space. By making this an attractive space in which people can linger and activities in the Yelde Hall can utilise, this part of the Conservation Area can be better appreciated. The curved bench seating in particular has been added to capitalise on the attractive view from the space looking towards St. Andrew's Church.
- 5.3 The addition of contemporary bench seating, lighting bollards and the curved planter is not considered to harm the setting of listed buildings or harm Chippenham Conservation Area. These elements would be playful and would attract people into the space to sit. It would enliven the public realm, with the colour, form and materials differentiating these pieces as contemporary elements nicely contrasting with the historic streetscape but also sympathetic to it. The scheme has been modified in line with pre-application advice from Wiltshire Council's Conservation Officer so that benches and lighting bollards are now proposed to be a softer oxide red colour which would sit better within the historic surroundings than the bright red and bright yellow colours originally proposed. Were these elements considered to harm the setting of listed buildings any such harm would be 'less than substantial' and would be outweighed by the public realm benefits associated with the proposal as a whole, in accordance with **NPPF Paragraphs 212-213 and 215**.
- 5.4 The proposed timber bin stores, sited adjacent to the Grade II Listed No. 63, have been designed to ensure that the important window on this elevation is not obscured. The bin stores would arguably improve the setting of the listed building as currently blue wheelie bins are positioned against this elevation detracting from its setting.

- 5.5 The proposal has been designed to be sympathetic to the design of any future proposals for the wider Upper Market Place as set out in **Policy TC3** of the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan. It would not prejudice the delivery of any future proposal here, but would be able to visually link in with any future proposals e.g. through seamless use of natural stone paving on both sites.
- 5.6 The proposed addition of soft landscaping, a planted tree in the ground, bug hotel features and a stacked stone boundary wall of the planter would increase biodiversity on the site, in compliance with Neighbourhood Plan **Policy GI1** and **CP50** of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.
- 5.7 The proposals would have a number of positive impacts for the climate at a local level including assisting in reducing flood risk by providing permeable soft landscaping surfaces during rainfall, and the permanent tree providing shade, cooling air temperatures and filtering air pollution in accordance with **NPPF Paragraphs 163 and 164**.
- 5.8 The proposals have taken on board pre-application advice received from Wiltshire Council Highways, Conservation, Urban Design and the Public Arts Officer. Based upon the individual concerns of these consultees several elements of the scheme have been omitted including the public art/sculpture, a proposed tree near the Yelde Hall and use of hoggin as a surface material. Additional bench seating included to be able to enjoy the view from the site looking towards St. Andrew's Church. After further discussions Wiltshire Council Highways were satisfied with the proposal to plant a tree in the ground/planter with a root deflector.
- 5.9 Informal consultation has taken place with businesses in the Shambles alleyways and The Waverly at No. 63.
- 5.10 As demonstrated above, the proposed public realm works would fully comply with national planning guidance, and development plan policies, and the scheme should be supported. There are no other material considerations which would mean reaching a different conclusion.

APPENDIX 1 - Location of Listed Buildings

Listed buildings denoted with black hatching



APPENDIX 2 - Listed Building Descriptions

Yelde Hall

ST9273SW MARKET PLACE 930-1/10/136 (North side) 25/04/50 The Yelde Hall and The Council Chamber (Formerly Listed as: MARKET PLACE (North side) The Old Town Hall (The Yelde Hall), The Council Chamber)

GV I

Formerly known as: The Old Fire Station MARKET PLACE. Town hall. Early C15, re-roofed and renewed 1614. Large panel timber-framed with irregularly-spaced uprights and various tension braces on a limestone rubble base with freestone quoins and dressings, stone slate roof. PLAN: 5-bay plan with entry to 4-bay open hall with storeyed end bay. EXTERIOR: 2 storeys; one-window range. To the inside-right of the east facade (front) are 2 small gables, that over the door has a plaster coat of arms, J.S. and date 1776. To the far right is an ashlar wall to a small lock-up yard, it has an arched niche with hoodmould and dog-tooth coping to a cornice. The north wall is C16 rubblestone replacing original frame to the ground floor with 2 segmental arched openings below a horizontal sliding sash window with 15 panes to each sash. The north rubblestone wall continues round to the west side for approx 3m with a loophole to the top. The timber-frame then steps down to the plinth. Windows to the west wall have been removed. INTERIOR: 4-bay collar-truss tie-beam hall roof with 2 tiers of windbraces, similar 5th bay to the north. At the north end, upstairs, is the former courtroom and council chamber, including panelling and bailiff's chair. Beneath it was the blind house or lock-up. HISTORY: before 1580, when The shambles was built, the hall had stood alone in the market place. Records exist of a blind house in the C16 (1563) and accounts for renovating in 1614. A notable survival of its type, remarkable for the retention of its large-panelled timber-framing and the 1st-floor council chamber. (Chamberlain, Joseph A: Chippenham: Chippenham: 1976-: 31; The Buildings of England: Pevsner N & Cherry B: Wiltshire: London: 1967-1975: 169).

Listing NGR: ST9218273236

54 & 55 Market Place

ST9273SW MARKET PLACE 930-1/10/130 (North side) 22/06/78 Nos.54 AND 55 (Formerly Listed as: MARKET PLACE (North side) Nos.54 AND 55 The Shambles)

GV II

Also known as: Nos.54 AND 55 THE SHAMBLES. Two shops on a corner site. Mid C19. Limestone ashlar, concrete tile roof continuous with No 71 to the right (qv), with wide eaves and moulded ridge stacks to party walls. One-unit plan extending on the 1st floor over the passage to the left. EXTERIOR: 3 storeys; 2-window range. The facade of No.54, facing north, has 6/6-pane sash windows and platbands between floors. To the right of the ground floor is a semicircular arch with chamfered rusticated voussoirs and keystone over a passage leading the the Yelde Hall (qv). to the left is a 6-panel door and overlight under a hood on console brackets. To the centre is a rectangular projecting shop window of 2

plate-glass panes, colonnettes, fascia moulded cornice and sill. Above the glazing are fretted cast-iron panels and below the word PURVEYORS is incised into the plinth. The left return has one blind window to each upper floor and a single-pane shop window similar to that at the front without the pierced panels and supported by 3 plain fretted brackets. No.55 facing north-east, of similar design, is one-window range and cants forward from No.54 to meet the east side of The Shambles. It has a 6/6-pane sash window to the 2nd floor, a C19 plate-glass sash to the 1st floor and a C20 shop to the ground floor. INTERIOR: not inspected.

Listing NGR: ST9214573253

62 & 63 Market Place

ST9273SW MARKET PLACE 930-1/10/132 (North side) 22/06/78 Nos.62 AND 63 (Formerly Listed as: MARKET PLACE (North side) Nos.62 AND 63 The Shambles)

II

Also known as: Nos.62 AND 63 THE SHAMBLES. House and shop, now house and 2 shops. Dated 1889 but apparently mid C19. Limestone ashlar, hipped pantile roof with brick stacks to rear. Double-depth plan. EXTERIOR: 3 storeys; both units symmetrical 3-window range. Continuous cornice and blocking course, pilasters to quoins and party wall, platband below 2nd floor and string course below 1st floor. Bracketed sills; 2/2-pane plate-glass sash windows to the 2nd floor, plate-glass sashes with margin panes to the 1st floor and centre of ground floor. No.62 to the right, formerly a house and wider than No.63, has semicircular-arched openings to the central range, the C20 door has 2 margin panes to the fanlight. A C20 shop has been inserted to the right of the door. No.63, always a shop, has recessed panels to pilasters flanking the door and shop front which support a plain fascia. Between the windows of the 2nd floor a plaque states AD 1889, below this is a semicircular-arched window similar to that of No.62. INTERIOR: not inspected.

Listing NGR: ST9219373213

APPENDIX 3 - Map in Chippenham Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2024)

