

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

Application No: PL/2026/04025 (LBC) & P/2026/03746 (PP)
Address: 1 High Street, Ramsbury
Case Officer: Joe Leesam

Please find following comments in respect of the above consultation:

Recommendations:

☐	No Comment
☐	Comment
☐	Support
☐	Support subject to conditions (please set out below)
☒	Object (for reasons set out below)
☐	No objections

Scope of comments: the following comments relate to the built historic environment.

National Policy and Guidance:

Section 16 & 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 – requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 – requirement to pay special attention to the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of the surrounding Conservation Area.

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024 (as amended February 2025)) outlines government policy, including the historic environment (Section 16). 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. Paragraphs 214 – 216 require a balanced approach with any harm which would be caused being weighed against the potential public benefits which might be achieved. National Planning Policy Guidance provides guidance on making changes to Heritage Assets.

Historic England's *Advice Note 2 – Making Changes to Heritage Assets* (2016) is also relevant guidance for applying the policies within the NPPF.

Historic England's "Conservation Principles" provides policy and guidance for the "sustainable management of the historic environment". Additional guidance is also contained within their publications:

- *Historic Environment Good Practice Planning Advice Note 2 – Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment*
- *Historic Environment Good Practice Planning Advice Note 3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd edition)*

Local Policy:

Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy Policy CP57 'Ensuring high quality design and place shaping': A high standard of design is required 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.

Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy Policy CP58 '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."

Site:

No.1 High Street Ramsbury is a grade II listed building dating from the mid-19th century according to the list description, although these cottages along the High Street can be slightly earlier, dating from the 18th century. The building is typical of the local vernacular buildings that positively contribute to the Ramsbury Conservation Area, being brick built with diaper headers under a slate roof.

The list description states the following, for means of identification purposes only:

House. c1820-40. Diaper brickwork with slate roof. 2-storey, 3 bays with later addition left containing shop. 4-panelled door in centre bay with reeded doorcase and simple bracketed canopy. 16- pane sashes with wide moulded boxes. Brick dentilled eaves. 4-flue stack between bays 2 and 3 were blocked window on elevation.

Proposal:

Change of use of former retail space to part of existing dwellinghouse, replacement rear extension and internal alterations.

Internal alterations include removal of an historic staircase within the shop.

Issues:

- Impact upon the preservation of the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural and/or historic interest.

Assessment:

The proposals are for the change of use to the existing shop, along with a replacement conservatory and various internal alterations. The application is a resubmission of recently refused applications, due to the lack of supporting information for the loss of a business premises, and harm to the listed building.

Post-decision discussions took place with the Agent to highlight the areas of concern relating to the internal alterations from a Conservation point of view, however these do not appear to have been addressed in these applications.

Firstly, the Heritage Statement is weak in its assessment of the proposals and their impact on the building's significance and features of interest. It primarily focuses on the loss of the retail space and is lacking in its assessment of the impact of works on the building's significance, a requirement of the NPPF (p.207).

The LPA is required to undertake its own assessment of the impact of the works (p.208) and comments on the different elements are as follows:

Shop/business unit:

There are no concerns about the principle of the change of use of this part of the building from a conservation point of view, and externally it remains virtually unchanged.

Internally, the proposals are to subdivide both the ground and first floor, including the removal of the historic staircase. Concerns over the removal of the historic staircase were expressed to the Agent, however this is still being proposed. A new staircase is to be inserted in its place. The existing staircase is an historic feature, original to the shop use, being a narrow 'space saver' type construction, which minimised the amount of space taken up on the shop floor. The supporting information does not provide any assessment of this historic feature and its contribution to the significance of the building, and its survival is quite unusual in such a context. Discussions on site over this staircase raised concerns over its use by family members, providing a potential hazard, and it was advised that the stairwell can be boarded over from above by extending floorboards to cover the opening, and enclosed at ground floor level with a door to form a cupboard. The additional staircase is unjustified, particularly as it requires the loss of an historic feature, which causes harm to the listed building.

Plans do not show the historic hoist system within the building – this should be requested, as its loss would not be acceptable, and whilst verbal confirmation was provided by the Agent in relation to the previous application, this has not been confirmed on the latest submission. There is no information on if the historic tongue and groove panelling is to be retained either. The supporting information should make all the works proposed for the conversion explicit as part of the application, which is lacking in this instance.

Plans to subdivide the GF of the shop floor are unjustified, and with the retention of the historic staircase, it would be questioned why this subdivision of the space is required, as it changes the character of the open shop floor character of this more industrial part of the building.

The plans to subdivide the first floor to provide a bathroom and bedroom could be achieved, with lightweight partitions as proposed. No details on how the plumbing will be achieved have been provided, although a new soil pipe on the front elevation will not be acceptable.

Main House:

Conservatory – there are no concerns over the loss of the existing conservatory, as it is of no historic or architectural significance, and there are no objections to the principle of its replacement. The proposed is a slight improvement on the previous scheme, but the projection of the roof beyond the rear elevation is awkward and increases its prominence by overlapping onto the brick elevation. This should be set back slightly so that the roof does not extend beyond the brickwork.

New/enlarged openings – the creation of 'open-plan' living between the kitchen, conservatory and sitting room is out of character with a traditional dwelling, and the loss of historic fabric to achieve this causes harm to the building's fabric, as well as its planform. Whilst nibs of wall have been left to evidence the historic plan, the character of the space is being changed to something more akin to modern developments, and causes harm to the internal character of this listed building. Some increased form of opening up could be achieved in this space, but should be limited to the size of the existing openings i.e. simply removing the windows and brickwork below – this reduces the loss of fabric, whilst creating a more open feel to this part of the living area. This is particularly the case with the wall between the conservatory and sitting room. There may be scope to remove the window and door between the existing kitchen, as the window opening and door opening combined, there is a column of brickwork remaining – removing this is still harm through loss of fabric, but could be considered if the other wall is retained. Internal elevations will be required, including details of structural support that will be required.

The GF plans show a 'possible' flue location within the proposed utility – this either needs to be confirmed or removed from the plans, to remove ambiguity from the proposals.

The new opening between the existing office and shop is already there, albeit blocked up at the moment – reinstatement is acceptable.

First floor – the creation of a new door opening and partitioning the room to extend the corridor is considered acceptable in this instance, as there is some evidence of previous alteration in this part of the building, and revising the room and new opening, whilst the latter removes historic fabric, retains the landing and room proportions that are part of the building's significance in its plan form. An internal elevation of the new opening should be requested.

The joinery details provided do not confirm the double glazing as being fitted with putty – this should either be confirmed on the plans or conditioned on a decision notice.

Summary & Conclusion:

The NPPF confirms that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). It makes clear that any harm to a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification.

As the proposals stand, there is less-than-substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, caused by the loss of historic features or unjustified works to the building. The application also lacks a robust historic impact assessment of the proposals to support the application.

Paragraph 215 allows that a level of harm may be offset by public benefits, which could include conservation benefits. In this case, however, no/insufficient objective justification has been provided to demonstrate that the benefits which will result from the works will outweigh the harm caused and, as a result, the proposals fail to meet with the requirements of current conservation legislation, policy or guidance.

As it stands, the applications should be refused, however there is scope for amendment to the proposals to provide an acceptable scheme that would gain officer support, and I suggest that these amendments are made (as outlined above).

Pippa Card
Senior Conservation Officer
Wiltshire Council Planning

Date: 06/08/2026