

APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION (MINOR DEVELOPMENT) CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/04566
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Yelde Hall, Market Place, Chippenham, SN15 3HL
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Public realm improvements including curved planter, bench seating, re-paving, cycle stands, lighting, soft landscaping and bin storage
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve with Conditions

Date of site visit 03/08/2026

PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought for public realm enhancement works to the land surrounding the Grade I listed Yelde Hall within Chippenham Conservation Area. The applicant advises that the proposals are intended to improve the setting of the building, enhance the quality of the public realm and increase opportunities for seating, landscaping and biodiversity enhancements. The scheme includes the introduction of a landscaped planter incorporating drought-resistant planting, a tree within a concealed planter, seating and biodiversity features, together with new cycle stands, a bin store, lighting columns, general and recycling bins, drainage improvements and areas of York stone paving. The works are proposed to be delivered in phases, with initial landscape, seating and public realm improvements being undertaken ahead of more extensive resurfacing works. The proposals also include the replacement of sections of existing hard surfacing with York stone paving and improvements to the treatment of the space to the rear of the Yelde Hall.

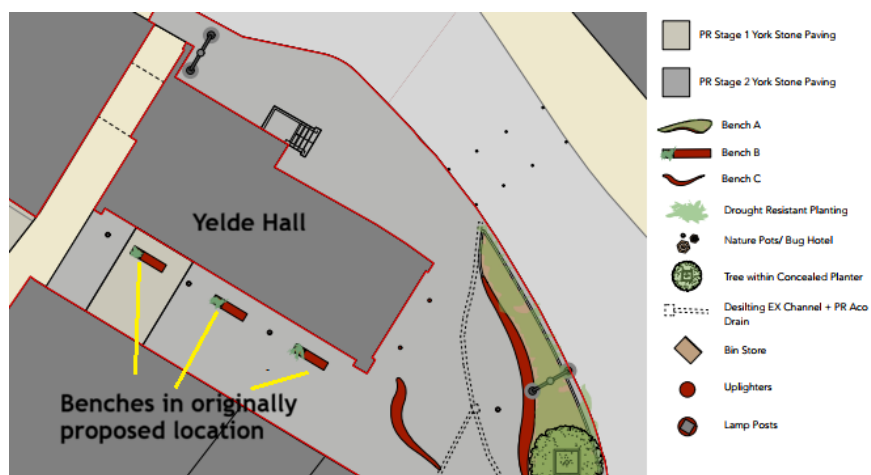
Below - Submitted proposed elevations:





Amended Plans / Historic England Comments

Following consultation responses, amended plans have been submitted revising the position of one of the proposed benches. The amended site plan confirms that Bench Type B has been relocated further away from the Yelde Hall in response to heritage concerns regarding its proximity to the Grade I listed building and to reduce its prominence within the immediate setting of the heritage asset. The bench has also been repositioned to avoid conflict with doors to the Barclays Bank building. Below is an extract of the originally submitted site plan:



An extract of the proposed revised layout is below, showing revised positions of “Bench B”:



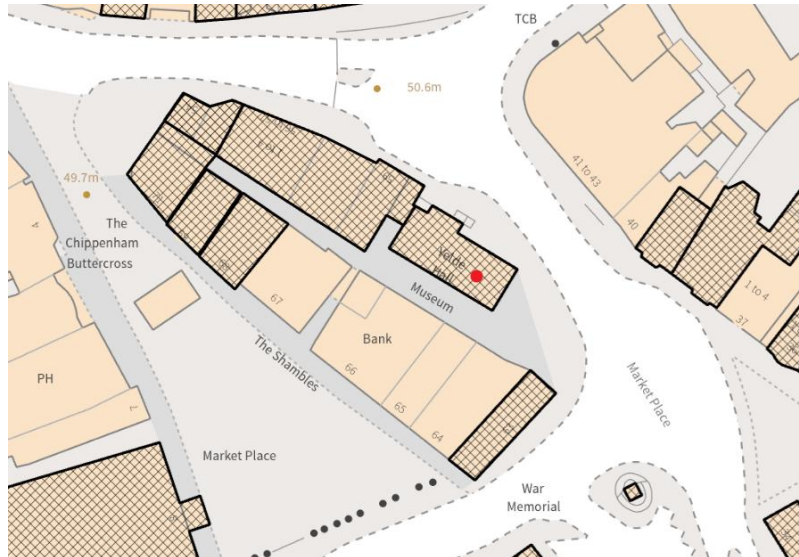
In addition, two recycling and waste bins have been added, to address representations received.

The assessment contained within this report has been undertaken on the basis of the amended plans.

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The application site comprises an area of public realm surrounding the Yelde Hall, a Grade I listed medieval timber-framed building located within the historic core of Chippenham and within the designated Chippenham Conservation Area. The site forms part of the marketplace and includes areas of hard surfacing, street furniture, lighting, planting and pedestrian routes connecting through The Shambles to the wider town centre. The Yelde Hall is an important heritage asset and community venue which hosts a range of cultural, educational and community events.

The immediate surroundings include a number of other designated heritage assets, including the Grade II listed Nos. 54 and 55 Market Place and Nos. 62 and 63 Market Place, together with other listed buildings and historic townscape features in the vicinity. Listed Buildings are indicated with black hatching on the plan below:



The site is characterised by a mix of surfacing materials, street furniture, lighting columns and planters, together with a network of pedestrian alleyways associated with The Shambles, as can be seen on the photograph taken on site below:



The site is in Flood Zone 1, with no particular risk of surface water flooding identified. The site is deemed as having a negligible risk from groundwater flooding.

PLANNING HISTORY

None that is relevant to this application

RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

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 Spatial Strategy Chippenham Community Area
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 58 Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment;

Draft Wiltshire Local Plan

At Full Council on 19 May 2026, the elected members of Wiltshire Council agreed to withdraw the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan. The said Plan has no material weight for the purposes of the application.

In accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, on 30th June 2026 Wiltshire Council published a notice of intention to prepare a new local plan for Wiltshire. The next stage is a Scoping Consultation which commences on 2nd September 2026. This plan is at a very early stage and currently carries no weight for decision making.

Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan (including Chippenham Design Guide and Conservation Area Character Appraisal)

- Policy TC4 – Development in Chippenham Conservation Area
-

Supplementary Planning Documents and other Guidance:

- Wiltshire Design Guide (adopted April 2024)
- National Design Guide

ISSUES

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

- Whether the development is acceptable in principle (CP 1 and 2)
- Whether the scheme constitutes high quality design (CP 57)
- Whether the scheme would have an acceptable impact upon the reasonable living conditions of the adjoining occupants (CP 57)
- Whether the scheme would preserve or enhance the historic environment (CP 58)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The views of consultees are material considerations in the determination of the application. However, the decision-maker must exercise their own planning judgement. Where consultees raise concerns or recommend conditions, these have been considered and are addressed within the assessment section of this report.

Historic England: Advice

“The application is for public realm improvements around the grade I Yelde Hall, a medieval timber-framed hall, located in the historic marketplace of the Chippenham Conservation Area.

We do not wish to comment in detail on the proposals but would suggest that the three benches to the south-west elevation of Yelde Hall be positioned outside the building opposite. This would afford better views of Yelde Hall and the wider conservation area, including the Church of St Andrew (grade II).*

If there are any material changes to the proposals beyond those we have suggested, please contact us. If you propose to determine the application in its current form, please inform us of the date of the committee and send us a copy of your report at the earliest opportunity. Please also advise us of the decision in due course.”

Historic England were advised of the amendments received to accord with their suggestion, and they subsequently advised that they had no further comments.

WC Highways: No objection

“No objection”

WC Conservation: No objection

“No Objection to the current proposals. The works are generally as discussed previously with the Town Council at an informal pre-application meeting. The works are considered to cause no harm to the setting of the Yelde Hall or any other listed building in the locality. The work being to an area of concrete slabs in front of the existing building.”

WC Public Protection: No objection

“No adverse comments from Public Protection.”

WC Urban Design No objection

"No objection"

Chippenham Town Council: Consulted, but offered no comment as the Town Council is the applicant.

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. Two representations have been received:

- 1) *"Background: I volunteer at Chippenham Museum and have hosted opening the Yelde Hall for many years. Prior to the current planters there was a single large planter that has benches surrounding it. This was well used, particularly since there are take away food establishments in the area. There being no litter bin visible people left litter and dropped cigarette ends around the bench. I used to collect this as it blew into the entrance of the Yelde Hall.*

Objection: I cannot support any seating proposal that does not include a clearly visible litter bin. People are lazy. They will leave litter and this will then detract from the area around the Yelde Hall instead of enhancing it.

Note: This is separate from the proposed bin stores which are for the use of the businesses who could then end up having litter added to their bins, effectively they would be paying for disposal of the public's rubbish.

Additional comment: I am not personally keen on the design of the benches and would prefer something more traditional. I know this is a matter of taste. I would however like to ask if consideration as been given to how hot the surfaces of the benches might get with the hot summers we are getting."

- 2) *"I am writing in response to the planning application concerning proposed improvements to the Yelde Hall area in Chippenham. While I welcome efforts to enhance this important historic space, I believe there are additional practical measures that would significantly improve the environment for residents, visitors, and local businesses.*

The most pressing issue is waste management. The area would benefit greatly from more frequent bin emptying, as current schedules allow rubbish to accumulate and detract from the appearance of the site. In addition, I would encourage the Council to consider installing the same style of bin stores proposed for Nos. 62 and 63 along The Shambles. Extending this approach throughout the alleyway would create a more orderly and visually coherent solution.

I would also ask whether the Council has considered installing (non-locked) gates at each end of The Shambles. These would help foster a stronger sense of community space whilst maintaining public access, discourage fly tipping, and still allow full access for waste collection.

I hope these suggestions can be incorporated into the final plans."

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 NPPF (NPPF) as a material consideration in the assessment.

The assessment below considers each of the main issues identified above. Each topic is assessed in turn with reference to the relevant policy context, the evidence submitted, consultee responses, and all other material considerations, before a conclusion is reached.

Principle of Development

Core Policies 1 and 2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy establish the overarching spatial strategy for Wiltshire and direct development towards the most sustainable locations, including Principal Settlements and Market Towns. Chippenham is identified as a Principal Settlement where the majority of growth and investment is directed. The application site lies within the defined settlement boundary of Chippenham and occupies a central town centre location associated with the Grade I listed Yelde Hall.

The application seeks planning permission for public realm enhancement works, including landscaping, seating, surfacing improvements, lighting and associated street furniture. The proposals do not involve the introduction of a new land use and are intended to improve the appearance, functionality and accessibility of an existing area of public realm within the town centre. The principle of undertaking such improvements in this location is therefore considered acceptable in spatial planning terms.

The acceptability of the development therefore turns principally on the detailed impacts of the proposals, particularly in relation to heritage assets, design, the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, amenity and other relevant material planning considerations. These matters are assessed below.

Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to achieve a high standard of design that responds positively to local character, context and distinctiveness.

Policies DP3-DP4 of the NPPF seek to ensure that development is well-designed, visually attractive, sustainable and responsive to its surroundings. Development should contribute positively to local character, create high quality places and support healthy and inclusive communities.

The Wiltshire Design Guide provides further guidance on achieving high quality, context-led design and should be taken into account where relevant.

The proposed development comprises a coordinated programme of public realm improvements surrounding the Grade I listed Yelde Hall. The scheme includes new hard and soft landscaping, seating, lighting, cycle parking, bin storage and associated public realm infrastructure intended to improve the appearance, functionality and legibility of the space. The proposals appear as a cohesive package, utilising a limited palette of complementary materials including York stone paving, stacked stone features, landscaping and oxide red metal seating.

The submitted plans demonstrate that the development has been designed specifically in response to its surroundings and seeks to rationalise what is currently a fragmented and visually cluttered environment. The introduction of high-quality paving materials, additional planting, seating and integrated public realm features would improve the visual quality of the space and create a more attractive environment for residents and visitors. The proposed tree, planting and biodiversity features would soften the appearance of the hard landscaped area whilst contributing positively to the character of the town centre.

The proposed seating and lighting have a contemporary appearance; however, their scale, form and materiality are considered appropriate within this town centre setting. The submitted details show that the seating has been designed as a series of bespoke features integrated within the overall public realm scheme rather than as isolated items of street furniture. Similarly, the lighting strategy is modest in scale and would assist in improving the usability and attractiveness of the space whilst avoiding unnecessary visual clutter.

It is noted that the Council's Urban Design team has advised that it has no objection to the proposals.

Overall, subject to the separate assessment of heritage impacts below, the proposals are considered to represent a well-considered design that would enhance the appearance of the site and contribute positively to the character and visual amenity of this part of Chippenham town centre. The development is therefore considered to accord with Core Policy 57 of the

Wiltshire Core Strategy, Policies DP3-DP4 of the NPPF and the objectives of the Wiltshire Design Guide.

Impact on Heritage Assets

From the point of view of the historic environment, the main statutory duties are set out within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Section 66(1) requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings and any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Section 72(1) requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas.

Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings. Core Policy 57 requires development to respond positively to local character and historic context through high quality design.

Policy TC4 of the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan (CNP) states that development within Chippenham Conservation Area will be permitted where *inter alia* it preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the Conservation Area; and is of high quality design that makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Policies HE4-HE10 of the NPPF recognise heritage assets as an irreplaceable resource and require proposals affecting heritage assets to be assessed having regard to their significance and the contribution made by their setting.

In accordance with the heritage policies of the NPPF, any harm to the significance of a heritage asset must be clearly identified and assessed. Where harm is identified, it should be categorised having regard to the relevant heritage policies and weighed against any public benefits arising from the proposal.

The application site surrounds the Grade I listed Yelde Hall and lies within the Chippenham Conservation Area. A number of other listed buildings are located within the immediate vicinity, including the Grade II listed 54 and 55 Market Place and 62 and 63 Market Place. The significance of the Yelde Hall derives not only from its exceptional architectural and historic interest as one of the oldest surviving buildings within Chippenham but also from its prominent position within the historic marketplace and its contribution to the wider character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The setting of the building is therefore an important component of its significance.

The submitted information identifies that the existing area is characterised by extensive areas of concrete paving, street clutter and fragmented landscaping which do little to reinforce the significance of the Yelde Hall or the wider historic townscape. The proposals seek to improve the quality of the public realm through the introduction of high-quality paving materials, landscaping, seating, lighting and associated public realm enhancements. The use of York stone paving, planting and a more coordinated approach to street furniture is considered

sympathetic to the historic environment and would assist in creating a more coherent and attractive setting for the heritage assets present.

The proposed seating, lighting and planter features introduce contemporary elements into the space. However, these features are modest in scale and have been designed as part of a coordinated public realm scheme. The materials and colour palette have been selected to complement the historic surroundings, and the development would not obscure or detract from important views of the Yelde Hall or other nearby heritage assets. The amended plans have further reduced the prominence of one of the proposed benches by relocating it further away from the Yelde Hall in response to consultation comments received from Historic England. The assessment of this application has been undertaken on the basis of these amended plans.

The Council's Conservation Officer has raised no objection to the proposals and advises that the works would cause no harm to the setting of the Yelde Hall or other listed buildings in the locality. Historic England initially suggested amendments to the positioning of the benches to afford better views of the Yelde Hall and the wider Conservation Area. Following the submission of amended plans addressing those concerns, Historic England confirmed that it had no further comments. The specialist heritage advice received is therefore supportive of the amended scheme.

Having regard to the significance of the designated heritage assets and the contribution made by their settings, the proposed development is considered to preserve the significance of the Grade I listed Yelde Hall, preserve the significance of nearby listed buildings and preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Chippenham Conservation Area. No harm to the significance of designated heritage assets has been identified. Consequently, the proposal accords with Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Core Policies 57 and 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, Policy TC4 of the CNP and the heritage policies of the NPPF.

Amenity

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.

Core Policy 57 (criterion vii) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to ensure that it does not result in unacceptable impacts upon the amenities of existing or future occupants through matters such as noise, disturbance, overlooking, visual intrusion or other adverse effects.

Policies DP3-DP4 of the NPPF seek to secure high quality places that promote health, wellbeing and inclusive communities.

The proposals comprise public realm enhancement works within an existing town centre environment and do not introduce any new residential accommodation or commercial uses. The development would provide additional seating, landscaping, lighting and associated public realm improvements intended to enhance the usability and appearance of the area surrounding the Grade I listed Yelde Hall. As such, the development is not considered likely to give rise to any unacceptable impacts on residential amenity through noise, disturbance, overlooking, loss of privacy or loss of light.

Two third-party representations have been received which raise matters relating primarily to the practical operation and management of the space. Whilst concerns regarding litter have been noted, the amended scheme incorporates general and recycling bins and the Council's Public Protection Team has raised no objection to the proposals. In the absence of any technical evidence demonstrating that the development would result in unacceptable amenity, waste or environmental health impacts, the concerns raised are not considered sufficient to justify withholding permission.

Comments were also made regarding the appearance of the proposed benches and the potential for metal seating surfaces to become warm during periods of hot weather. Whilst these observations are noted, matters of personal preference regarding design are inherently subjective. Furthermore, no substantive evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the seating would result in an unacceptable amenity impact. The proposed seating forms part of a coordinated public realm scheme and its acceptability in visual terms has been assessed elsewhere within this report.

Suggestions relating to more frequent bin collections, the provision of additional bin stores elsewhere within The Shambles and the installation of gates at either end of the alleyway are noted, however Chippenham Town Council is the public body responsible for the emptying of bins in the high street. Furthermore these matters do not form part of the application currently under consideration and therefore carry limited weight in the determination of the proposal. The application must be assessed on the basis of the development as submitted.

Having regard to the nature, scale and purpose of the development, the proposals are not considered to result in any unacceptable impact upon the amenities of nearby occupiers or users of the surrounding area. The development therefore complies with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant design and amenity objectives of the NPPF.

Highways Impacts and Parking

Policies TR3-TR8 of the NPPF seek to ensure that development is supported by safe, suitable and sustainable transport arrangements. Development should provide appropriate access, promote sustainable travel choices where possible and avoid unacceptable impacts on highway safety and the operation of the transport network.

Core Policies 60-64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy require development to provide safe access, promote sustainable transport, minimise transport impacts and provide appropriate parking arrangements.

The application relates to public realm enhancement works within an existing town centre location and does not involve the creation of a new use or development that would be expected to generate significant additional vehicle movements. The proposals comprise landscaping, seating, lighting, paving improvements, cycle parking and associated public realm works. Existing access arrangements would remain unchanged.

The Council's Highway Officer was consulted on the application and raised no objection to the proposals. Having regard to the nature and scale of the development, it is not considered that

the scheme would result in any adverse impact upon highway safety, parking provision or the operation of the local highway network. The proposals therefore accord with Core Policies 60-64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant transport policies of the NPPF.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The application seeks permission for public realm enhancement works surrounding the Grade I listed Yelde Hall within the settlement boundary of Chippenham and within the Chippenham Conservation Area. The proposed works include public realm improvements, landscaping, seating, lighting, cycle parking, biodiversity enhancements and improvements to surfacing and street furniture.

The principle of development is considered acceptable having regard to the site's sustainable town centre location. The proposals have been designed specifically for the site and would improve the appearance and functionality of the existing public realm through the introduction of a coordinated and high-quality palette of materials and landscaping. The development would therefore contribute positively to the character and appearance of this part of the town centre.

Particular regard has been given to the impact of the development on designated heritage assets. The site surrounds the Grade I listed Yelde Hall and lies within the Chippenham Conservation Area. The amended scheme takes account of comments received from Historic England, including the repositioning of seating to afford improved views of the Yelde Hall and wider Conservation Area. The Council's Conservation Officer has advised that the proposals would cause no harm to the setting of the Yelde Hall or any other listed buildings in the locality, and no heritage harm has been identified as a result of the development. The proposal is therefore considered to preserve the significance of nearby listed buildings and preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The proposal would not result in unacceptable impacts upon residential or public amenity, highway safety or parking. Technical consultees, including the Highway Authority and Public Protection Team, have raised no objections to the scheme. The amended plans also provide general and recycling bins, addressing concerns raised during the consultation process regarding waste and litter management.

The proposals would further deliver biodiversity, public realm and townscape benefits through the introduction of additional planting, a tree, biodiversity features and high-quality public seating and landscaping, helping to create a more attractive, accessible and welcoming environment around one of Chippenham's most significant historic buildings.

Taking all matters into account, it is concluded that the proposal accords with the relevant provisions of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan, the NPPF and the statutory duties contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation

Areas) Act 1990. There are no material considerations which indicate that planning permission should be withheld. Accordingly, the application is recommended for approval, subject to the conditions set out below.

RECOMMENDATION: That Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to conditions

1. Time Limit

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. Approved Plans

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

- PR Materiality 782-3-15B received 9 Sept 2026
- PR Bench Visuals 782-3-16B received 9 Sept 2026
- PR Lighting 782-3-12B received 9 Sept 2026
- PR SW-SE Elevations 782-3-07B received 9 Sept 2026
- Proposed Site Plan 782-3-06B received 9 Sept 2026
- PR Site Plan 782-3-14B received 9 Sept 2026
- PR NE-NW Elevations 782-3-08B received 9 Sept 2026
- PR Bench A 782-3-09B received 9 Sept 2026
- PR Bench B 782-3-10B received 9 Sept 2026
- Location Plan 782-3-01 received 21 Jul 2026
- Proposed Bench C 782-3-11 received 21 Jul 2026
- Proposed Bin Store 782-3-13 received 21 Jul 2026

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. Landscaping Implementation

All planting comprised in the approved details shall be carried out in the first planting season following completion of the development. Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years from their planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species.

REASON: To ensure the successful establishment of the approved landscaping scheme.