

MEMORANDUM

From:	Built Heritage Officer		
Service	Green Infrastructure	App No:	250303
Address:	5 Broad Street, Wokingham, RG40 1AU		
Proposal:	Full application for the proposed installation of a replacement shop front door.		
Heritage Assets:	Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area 5 Broad Street - NDHA		
	Listed buildings along with conservation areas are classed as designated heritage assets under the NPPF (2024) and in the Council's Local Plan policies.		
Site Visit Made:	Yes		

Summary Of Recommendations

Objection – Refusal Recommended

Comments On Proposal

The application proposes the removal of the entrance doors to no. 5 Broad Street, the former NatWest Bank, with the subsequent installation of open glazed replacements.

Commissioned by, and opened as, the London & County Banking Co in 1905, no. 5 Broad Street is an imposing structure formed in the Edwardian Queen Anne Revival style, as was fairly typical for banking buildings at the time. First established in the 1830s, the institution went through a number of mergers and changes of name, eventually becoming the Westminster Bank in 1923, and latterly NatWest in 1970. The bank was built on the former medieval burgage plot, of which the pattern and form can easily still be identified along Broad Street today. By virtue of its age, architectural and historic interest, as well as the positive contribution to the both the character and appearance of the Wokingham Town Conservation Area, and to the setting of the neighbouring listed buildings, 5 Broad Street is identified as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA). Part of the NDHA's significance is drawn from the architectural interest of the building, that of the early 20th century Queen Anne Revival. Components of the Queen Anne Revival include strong emphasis on architectural detailing, with an almost exaggeration, or caricature of the late 17th / early 18th century originals. Whereas the original may have slightly more delicate and refined detailing, the Revival style will fully embrace architectural flourishes – i.e. the use of swags, string courses, quoins etc. This can clearly be seen in the case of 5 Broad Street, for example the rather

exaggerated fruit laden festoon above the front entrance. Further to this, are the front doors themselves. Constructed from oak, panelled, part glazed with reverse ogee arched windows, the double doors are undoubtedly correct in style and form for the building. From examination, it is likely they are the 1905 originals, given the fitment to the Portland stone ashlar and relationship with the associated fan light. Both doors and fanlight are without doubt in the original position, given the recessed nature that would be expected, evidenced from historic photographs, physical inspection and from the internal walling which is flush with the door and fanlight. The separated fan light and arched ground floor windows (as well as the first-floor sashes) are certainly original to the construction and the doors appear concurrent in style, material and finish (notwithstanding obviously modern repainting). It may be the case the doors were replaced in the 1920s, associated with the bank re-branding as the Westminster, however it is without doubt they are of age, and positively contribute to the architectural interest of the NDHA and by association, the character and appearance of the Conservation and setting of listed buildings in the vicinity.

Conversely, the proposed replacement doors lack any architectural interest and are devoid of detailing relating to the host building. The installation of such generic items would seek to harm the significance of the NDHA and thus by association the designated heritage asset of the Conservation Area.

As such, the proposal would seek to remove a historic architectural feature which positively contributes to the NDHA and to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The associated replacements would not accurately replicate an authentic design and thus the proposals would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area (S72, P(LBCA)A 90). Similarly, through the identified erosion of character and appearance, the proposals would also fail to preserve the setting of the listed buildings (S66, P(LBCA)A 90), and other assets, thus causing harm to their special interest.

The proposed alterations would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the identified designated heritage asset. The harm would arise through the unsympathetic architectural form and detailing of the proposed replacement doors, loss of historic fabric and erosion to historic interest. No public benefits have been identified that would outweigh this harm (Section 16, NPPF).

Given the identified harm, the proposed development would conflict with Policy CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy and Policy TB24 of the Managing Development Delivery local plan, and thus refusal of the application is advised.

Conditions			
N/A			
Date:	18/03/2025	Signed:	Roderick McDonald Built Heritage Officer