

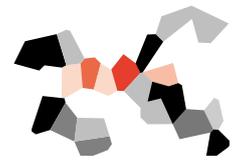
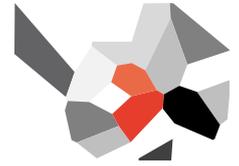
# Design & Access Statement incorporating a supporting Planning Statement

Signal Point, Station Road, Swindon

On behalf of Narbeth Management Ltd



August 2018  
C8643, Signal Point, Swindon





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# Signal Point

## Narbeth Management Ltd

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Author: ER

Checked by: MMD

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Date: 13.08.2018

Project Code: C8643

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DPDS Consulting Group  
Old Bank House  
5 Devizes Road  
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Swindon  
SN1 4BJ

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# Signal Point, Swindon



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1.0 Introduction

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5.0 Development Proposals

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# 1.0

# Introduction

# 1.0 Introduction

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- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement incorporating a supporting Planning Statement has been prepared by DPDS Consulting Group and is submitted in support of the full planning application for external façade repairs to include the partial replacement of cladding, full replacement of windows and provision of new atrium and replacement canopy to Signal Point, Station Road, Swindon, SN1 1FE.
- 1.2 This planning application has been submitted on behalf of Narbeth Management Ltd who are the leaseholders of Signal Point.
- 1.3 In line with National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (reference Paragraph: 031 Reference ID: 14-031-20140306), this statement:
- (a) explains the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development; and
  - (b) demonstrates the steps taken to appraise the context of the proposed development, and how the design of the development takes that context into account.
- 1.4 The overall approach to this statement is to present the required information and analysis in an integrated and legible format. It demonstrates how the proposed development responds to the sensitive context of the area.
- 1.5 This statement also explains how relevant Development Plan policies have been taken into account. It also details the design philosophy and proposals and includes the following chapters:
- Site context and analysis
  - Relevant planning history
  - Planning policy context
  - Development proposals
  - Design rationale
  - Conclusions
- 1.6 The site is located above Swindon train station in the heart of the town centre. This area generates first impressions for visitors to Swindon, and for millions of rail users who pass by. Signal Point is a very prominent building and has been unoccupied for a number of years since Network Rail moved offices. It is located within the ‘Station Arrival Quarter’ as defined in the ‘Swindon 2020: Masterplan review and delivery plan’. In its current form Signal Point provides a very poor first impression to visitors using the gateway to the town centre.
- 1.7 The Vision underpinning the Signal Point proposals is to regenerate a tired and dated building into an attractive, well designed building that will encourage investment and re-use. The vision is discussed in more detail later in this Statement.
- 1.8 The proposed development will greatly improve and revitalise the Swindon Station Arrival Quarter. This proposal is an exciting project for Swindon town centre and will help to achieve part of the Swindon 2020: Masterplan review and delivery plan. This planning application should be received positively and be seen as a good news story for the town.

2.0

# Site Context and Analysis

# 2.0 Site Context and Analysis

## Site Description

- 2.1 This section of the Design and Access Statement outlines the assessment of the context of the site that has taken place to inform the design process.
- 2.2 Signal Point is a 12 storey tall building with 9,504 sqm of floorspace (9,004 sqm is vacant). It is primarily office use (Use Class B1a), although it is currently vacant for this use. It also contains a shop/café (Costa) on its ground floor (Use Class A1/A3) which is approximately 177 sqm and a taxi control office (Cross Street Cars) on its first floor (Use Class: Sui Generis) which is approximately 323 sqm and the station entrance is at the ground floor of the building. Figure 1 provides images of these other uses at Signal Point.
- 2.3 The site is located centrally within the town of Swindon and within the northern boundary of Swindon's 'Town Centre' and 'Central Area Action Plan' (for planning policy purposes). It is approximately a 5 - 15 minute walking distance to town centre and central business uses. Other notable services and facilities in the site's surrounding vicinity include Swindon Railway Station, Swindon Bus Station to the south, Swindon College and St Marks Recreation Ground to the north, and the STEAM Museum and Designer Outlet Centre to the west. All are approximately within a maximum 20 minute walking distance from the site. Figure 2, 3 and 4 provides images of some of these uses.
- 2.4 Station Road runs south-west to north-east to the south of the site and this road leads to the B4289 which in turn leads to the A419 and M4, connecting Swindon to cities such as Bristol, Reading and London. The site is also accessible by a variety of major public transport modes that stem from Swindon Railway Station. These modes include rail and bus services that connect Swindon with the rest of England, Scotland and Wales.
- 2.5 There are also local bus services that serve the Swindon area and pick-up and drop-off passengers outside the south of the site. Furthermore, there are taxi ranks outside the site to the south and east and drop-off parking along Station. There is also external cycle parking close to the site.
- 2.6 Access to the site's car park (known as Swindon Station Main Car Park) is to the west of Station Road and is currently for public use. This car park is c.0.9 ha and leased by the applicant.
- 2.7 Pedestrian access to Signal Point is on its southern frontage and this is also where the shop/café is located. On the ground floor and the south-eastern façade of the building the pedestrian entrance is connected to Swindon Railway Station. Above the entrance to the station is the taxi control office and rank and its taxis used for operations are kept outside it to the east.



▲ Figure 1 | Uses at Signal Point

# 2.0 Site Context and Analysis



▲ Figure 2 | Swindon Town Centre (Source: Switch on to Swindon)



▲ Figure 3 | Designer Outlet Centre (Source: Switch on to Swindon)



▲ Figure 4 | Steam Museum (Source: Swindon 2020: Masterplan review and delivery plan)

# 2.0 Site Context and Analysis

## Character Appraisal

### Materials

2.8 Signal Point comprises a mix of traditional and modern materials and features. The shop/café and taxi control office and rank have an internal and external appearance separate to the rest of Signal Point, and these appearances reflect their respective uses and brands.

2.9 The buildings within the site's immediate vicinity comprise a mixture of brick colours, tiles, panel cladding, metal frames and rectangular windows. It appears that some materials are of higher quality and were introduced more recently than those of Signal Point.

### Appearance

2.10 The current lifeless character of the building can be attributed to the absence of use of the majority of it. As a result, the building appears dilapidated as several windows are boarded up and some of the external materials are in poor condition. Internally, the vacant parts of Signal Point are also in poor condition and under maintained. Figure 5 provides images showing the current appearance of Signal Point.

2.11 The site is situated within an urban environment, comprised of buildings and spaces of various sizes, uses and materials that reflect their age, historic design trends and heritage. Signal Point is the building that has the greatest mass and scale in its immediate vicinity. To the south of the site is an area of business/commercial uses and the buildings are in the main multi-storey, block shaped with extended sections and facades which is representative of their more modern architectural style. They comprise various dark styled cladding, many windows fenestrated in uniform styles and bricks. The SN1 (see figure 6) building

approximately 40m south of the site and the Tri Centre (see figure 7) are good examples of this appearance and character. Similarly styled commercial buildings in close proximity to the site include Milford House, the Jury's Inn, Focal Point, Station Square and Western House (see figures 8-13).



▲ Figure 5 | Current appearance of Signal Point



▲ Figure 6 | SN1 office block, Swindon  
(Source: [www.geograph.org.uk](http://www.geograph.org.uk))



▲ Figure 7 | Zurich, Tri Centre, Swindon

# 2.0 Site Context and Analysis



▲ Figure 8 | Milford House, Swindon



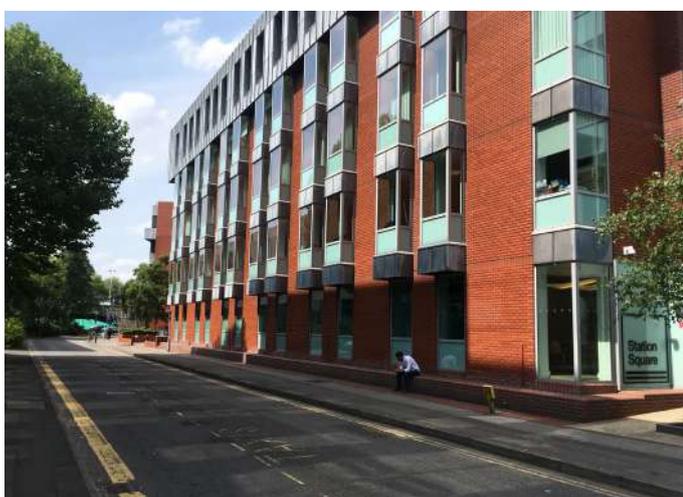
▲ Figure 11 | Façade of Jury's Inn, Swindon



▲ Figure 9 | Focal Point, Swindon



▲ Figure 12 | Western House, Swindon



▲ Figure 10 | Gloucester Street (Station Square), Swindon



▲ Figure 13 | Alexander House, business Centre, Swindon

# 2.0 Site Context and Analysis

## Historic environment

2.12 The Railway Area North Conservation Area and the Railway Area South Conservation Area are located to the west of the site. The Swindon Railway Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2006) on page 2 states the following:

“The Swindon Railway Village Conservation Area comprises a collection of buildings and open spaces of special interest laid out in a planned and incremental way in a compressed period of time (c.1840-1880) to satisfy the needs and requirements of the workforce of the GWR Company at Swindon.”

The conservation area’s interest lies in its national and international importance as an early planned railway village, the intrinsic value of its buildings, trees and open spaces and its significance as an integral part of the history of Swindon.”

2.13 Page 3 of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan adds:

“The Swindon Railway Village Conservation Area extends beyond the terraced cottages, pubs and other central buildings of the planned 1840’s railway village, to include The Park recreation ground, St Mark’s Church and vicarage, a former GWR school building and carriage-works next to the mainline railway and the old GWR Works entrance from where a tunnel, or subway, runs northwards under the tracks to the former main GWR works. It therefore encloses all the essential elements of the GWR’s historical railway settlement south of the mainline railway.”

2.14 Page 9 of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan outlines the number of historic, architectural and environmental factors within the Conservation Area:

- “The historic importance of the Railway Village as one of the earliest examples of a model estate comprehensively planned and built by an industrial company, the Great Western Railway Company, for its employees;
- The area’s historic relationship with the adjacent former GWR works, the workplace of the village residents, now designated the Swindon Railway Works Conservation Area;
- The area’s associations with the Great Western Railway Company and the Paddington to Bristol ‘Great Western’ railway line which has been proposed by the Secretary of State for designation as a UNESCO ‘World Heritage Site’...
- The architectural and historic interest of the area’s buildings, almost all of which were built by, or for, the Great Western Railway Company in a compressed period of time (c. 1840 -1880), providing a unique example of Victorian planning and architecture;..
- The prevalent use of local stone as a building material.”

2.15 The Great Western Railway line runs east to west on

the site’s northern boundary of the proposed site. The Swindon Railway Station building (see figure 15) is Grade II Listed and there are other Listed Buildings in close proximity to the proposed site including the Queens Hotel, Great Western Hotel, the former Swindon Steam Laundry, Swindon Mechanics Institute (see figure 16) and a Stone Boundary Wall (see figure 14) to the former Great Western Railway Works. As noted within the Listing for the Swindon Railway Station Building, there is group value with it and these other Grade II Listed Buildings which together emphasise the importance of the Great Western Railway works.

2.16 The Stone Boundary Wall was originally built as part of the southern boundary of the Great Western Railway Works to the west of Swindon station. The wall has integral significance with the history of the Great Western Railway.



▲ Figure 14 |Stone Boundary Wall



▲ Figure 15 |Swindon Railway Station building



▲ Figure 16 |The Grade II\* Mechanics Institute (Source: Swindon 2020: Masterplan review and delivery plan)

3.0

# Relevant Planning History

# 3.0 Relevant Planning History

3.1 The full planning history for the site can be viewed in Table 1.

3.2 The most recent planning permission was granted for the erection of additional external bicycle storage and change of use of part of the ground floor to two shops/cafés (Use Class A1/A3) on 24th July 2015 (ref. S/15/0604). One of the two units (Costa) is operational but the other has remained vacant.

3.3 A prior approval notification for the change of use of part of ground and 1st floors and floors 2 - 12 from offices (Class B1(a)) to 136no. flats (Class C3) was submitted on 28th May 2015 (ref. S/PRIORC/15/0873). A decision was issued on 13th July 2015 which confirmed that Prior Approval was not required. The change of use from B1a) to C3 has not been implemented.

3.4 The site is on the council's Brownfield Land Register.

Date of submission	Application number	Proposal	Outcome
28/05/2015	S/PRIORC/15/0873	Prior Approval Notification for the change of use of part of ground and 1st floors and floors 2 - 12 from offices (Class B1(a)) to 136no. flats (Class C3).	Prior approval not required.
15/04/2015	S/15/0604	Erection of additional storey to provide ancillary uses, external cycle enclosure, change of use of part of ground floor to Use Class A1/A3 and external alterations.	Permission Granted
03/02/2015	S/PRIORC/15/0166	Prior Approval Notification for the change of use of part of ground and first floors and floors two to twelve from offices (class B1(a)) to residential use (class C3) (126no. flats).	Prior approval not required
31/01/2014	S/14/0171	Change of use from Parcel Delivery Office to Taxi Booking Office and Waiting Room. (Variation of condition 2 of planning permission S/07/1663/HMC).	Permission Granted
28/01/2014	S/14/0140	Erection of a fabric awning to shopfront.	Permission Granted
16/09/2009	S/ADV/09/1659	Retrospective application for the display of 4no. banners.	Permission Refused
20/07/2009	S/09/1270	Change of use of part of Ground Floor from Class B1 (Office) to Classes A1 (shops), and A3 (Restaurants and Cafes).	Permission Granted
08/07/2009	S/ADV/09/1159	Display of corporate illuminated signage.	Permission Granted
02/07/2009	S/09/1127	Installation of new shop front and entrance door.	Permission Granted
03/11/2008	S/08/2142	Change of use of part of ground floor from office (class B1) and cafe ancillary to the office use to cafe (class A3)/Retail (class A1).	Permission Granted
24/07/2008	S/ADV/08/1505	Display of Banner (Retrospective).	Permission Granted
07/03/2008	S/ADV/08/0504	Display of signage.	Split decision for advertisement consent
24/01/2008	S/ADV/08/0153	Display of temporary banners (Retrospective).	Permission Refused
03/07/2007	S/07/1663	Change of use from Parcel Delivery Office to Taxi Booking Office and Waiting Room.	Permission Granted
24/06/2004	S/04/2455	Erection of a bicycle Shelter.	Permission Granted

▲ Table 1 | Full planning history for the site

4.0

Planning  
Policy  
Context

# 4.0 Planning Policy Context

4.1 Section 38(6) within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states this application must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The adopted Development Plan for this site comprises the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 and the Swindon Central Area Action Plan (CAAP). The Swindon Design Guide and national planning policy are material considerations. This section discusses these in more detail.

## Development Plan

### Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026

4.2 The Local Plan (adopted March 2015) sets how development will be delivered and managed across Swindon Borough up to 2026. The relevant policies and the applicable elements for the proposed development are as follows:

#### *Policy SD1: Sustainable Development Principles*

4.3 This policy outlines the strategic elements that constitute the Council's ideology of sustainable development and that proposed development must contribute towards. The relevant elements are:

- High quality design;
- Respecting, conserving and/or enhancing the natural, built and historic environments; and
- Retaining jobs and aiding the growth of the local economy and Town Centre regeneration.

#### *Policy SD3: Managing Development*

4.4 This policy states that the Council will work proactively to secure development that improves the economic and environmental conditions for those working in Swindon.

#### *Policy DE1: High Quality Design*

4.5 This policy requires high standards of design for all development. The policy elaborates that the assessment for whether development is of this standard will be against the following design principles:

- a) Context and character (existing built characteristics, features of importance and site conditions);
- b) Layout, form and function of the resulting development (detailed design principles relating to the proposals use of space);
- c) Amenity (light, noise, odour, privacy etc.); and
- d) Quality of the public realm.

#### *Policy DE2: Sustainable Construction*

4.6 This policy requires development to demonstrate passive solar benefits (through ventilation, cooling and lighting).

#### *Policy SC1: Swindon's Central Area*

4.7 The Local Plan Policies Map identifies the site within defined Swindon's Central Area. The policy requires high quality design for all developments within this area.

#### *Policy EN10: Historic Environment and Heritage Assets*

4.8 This policy notes that any development in the vicinity of a Listed Building shall not be permitted where there is a demonstrable adverse impact upon those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic significance, including their setting. Paragraph 4.383 of the Local Plan states the Council will consider favourably proposals that preserve or enhance the setting of Listed Buildings.

#### *Policy SC2: Swindon's Existing Urban Communities*

4.9 This policy identifies that within urban communities, priorities include the regeneration of the Swindon Central Area and the protection and enhancement of economic assets.

### Swindon Central Area Action Plan

4.10 The Swindon Central Area Action Plan (CAAP) was adopted in February 2009 and it provides a detailed policy framework for delivering the regeneration of Central Swindon, an area that encompasses the Town Centre. The following policies are relevant to the proposal and site context:

#### *Policy CAAP 1: High Quality and Innovative Design*

4.11 As a general requirement, "High quality design will be required of all new development in Central Swindon." Design should:

- "incorporate active frontages especially where the development forms part of the Town Centre;
- ensure entrances are emphasised and designed to complement the public realm onto which they front;...
- embody the principles of inclusive design and access for all;
- preserve or enhance the character, appearance and setting of Conservation Areas or Listed Buildings;..."

4.12 With particular regard to Tall Buildings, the policy notes they should:

- "enhance the existing skyline of the town;...
- create a celebrated entrance at ground floor level and demonstrate how the design of the building responds

# 4.0 Planning Policy Context

to the human scale at street level, and how the building relates to the street...

- provide a mix of uses, in particular at ground floor level which should usually front onto a public space;
- provide evidence why other forms of massing across the site, in place of a tall building, may be inappropriate in terms of density and urban form;
- and provide a parking strategy that illustrates how the development can accommodate demand for parking and how any reduction in provision will have an impact on adjacent car parks."

## Policy CAAP 16: The Railway Corridor Development Requirements

- 4.13 The site lies within 'The Railway Corridor' as defined within the CAAP Proposals Map and therefore development is encouraged that would provide "An attractive new railway station entrance...to the south of the railway". Furthermore, development should provide "A mixed use scheme, encompassing commercial...facilities" that protects and enhances the heritage assets in the area.

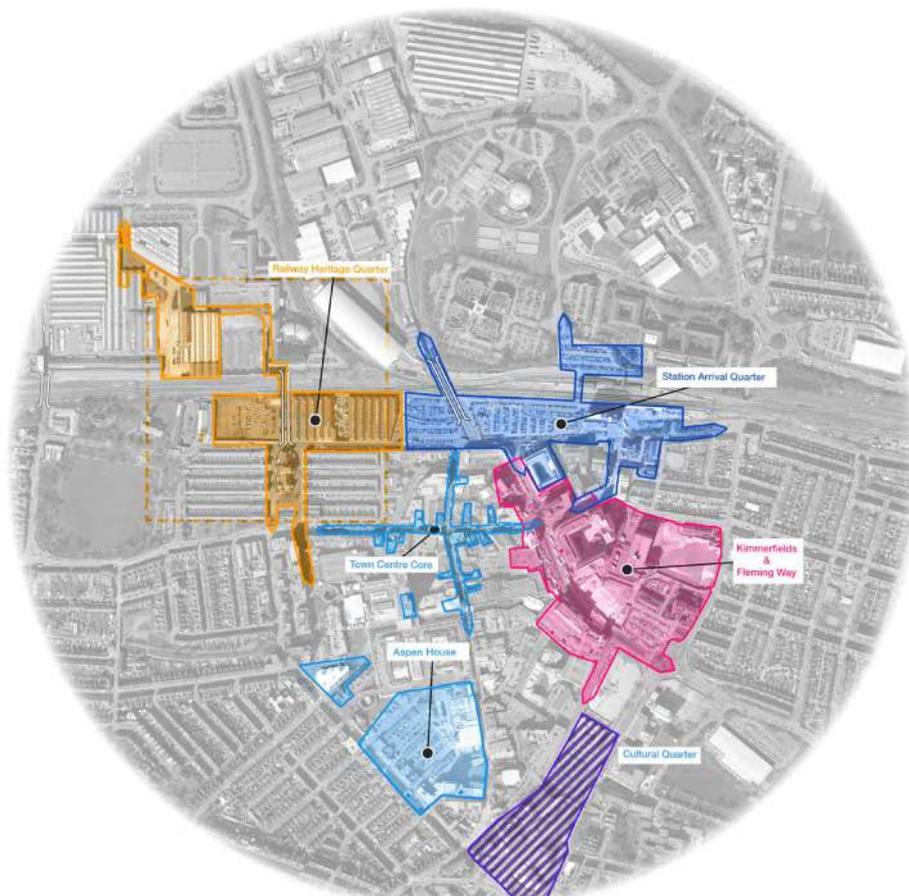
## Swindon 2020: Masterplan review and delivery plan

- 4.14 The Swindon 2020: Masterplan review and delivery plan (December 2016) was commissioned by Swindon Borough Council's regeneration agency Forward Swindon and focuses on priority areas and projects to help to accelerate and implement the principles of Swindon Town Centre Masterplan published in 2013. The document defines delivery projects and it is noted that the proposed site is within the 'Station Arrival Quarter'. Figure 17 taken from the Swindon 2020: Masterplan review and delivery plan defines the 'Station Arrival Quarter'. As can be seen in figure 17 the 'Railway Heritage Quarter' is adjacent to the 'Station Arrival Quarter'.

- 4.15 Page 20 of the document states:

"This area generates first impressions for visitors to Swindon, and for millions of rail users who pass by. The station itself, the vacant Signal Point House, the surface car parking and some of the existing buildings combine to give a very poor first impression.

Intuitive way finding through the town centre is poor and the view along Wellington Road to the Tri- Centre from the Station forecourt is not inviting..."



▲ Figure 17 | Station Arrival Quarter (Source: Swindon 2020: Masterplan review and delivery plan)

# 4.0 Planning Policy Context



▲ Figure 18 | Aerial photo of Station Arrival Quarter (Source: Swindon 2020: Masterplan review and delivery plan)

4.16 It is specifically noted that page 43 states:

“The proposals also include the adjacent Signal Point House. This is a prominent building above Swindon station which has been unoccupied for years since Network Rail moved offices. Over the years, a number of attempts have been made to find a tenant to move in, without success. The building is currently leased [...] and the demise includes some carparking to the east. Network Rail are currently reviewing options and looking to engage with the leaseholder.”

4.17 This proposal will assist in achieving some of the objectives for the ‘Station Arrival Quarter’. The Swindon 2020: Masterplan review and delivery plan outlines on page 20 the other redevelopments targets for this quarter:

“Comprehensive redevelopment of this area over the next five years should be targeted to include public realm improvements, the refurbishment of Paragon and GWR Hotel, highways works, the bridge link to a new North Star multi-storey Car Park and the development of elements of NR lands to the West of the station.”

## Swindon Design Guide

4.18 The Swindon Design Guide was adopted by Swindon Borough Council in December 2006 and seeks to ensure development in the Borough will embody good design principles. Page 25 notes buildings that are attractive and adaptable will last for a long time. Page 14 states a well-designed environment boosts civic pride and can attract

investment and it can increase output and employee satisfaction in the workplace (page 15). The value of good design is also recognised in occupancy rates of a building (page 17).

## National Planning Policy Framework

4.19 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2018) sets out the government’s planning policies and how they are to be applied. It states the purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development. The revised NPPF outlines that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and for decision-making this means “approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay” (paragraph 11). The relevant parts of the NPPF for this proposals are as follows:

4.20 Chapter 1. ‘Building a strong, competitive economy’ outlines the government’s approach to economic growth. This is partly to ensure the planning system does what it can to support sustainable economic growth (paragraph 80). This part of the NPPF elaborates that “significant weight” should be placed on this.

4.21 Chapter 12 ‘Achieving Well-designed Places’ notes good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Paragraph 131 within this chapter states planning decisions should help raise the standards of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

4.22 Chapter 16. ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’ recognises heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and appropriate conservation of them is of “significance.” In achieving this, local planning authorities should take into account the desirability of enhancing the significance of the heritage asset. Paragraph 189 notes in determining planning applications, a description of the significance of any heritage assets affected should be provided, including any contribution made by their setting.

4.23 The revised NPPF adds that “great weight” should be given to the conservation of a heritage asset and substantial harm to a heritage asset will require “clear and convincing” justification (paragraph 193 and 194). Where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset, any resulting harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

5.0

# Development Proposal

# 5.0 Development Proposal

5.1 This chapter sets out the development proposal and provides planning policy analysis on the principle of the development.

## Vision

5.2 The Vision underpinning the Signal Point proposals is to regenerate a tired and dated building, one that holds significance in Swindon as one of the first buildings observed when arriving and departing from the train station, into an attractive, well designed building that will encourage investment and re-use of it.

5.3 The 'Vision' is associated with direct and indirect benefits for Swindon. The improved character and appearance of the building can facilitate investment within it and rekindle its original purpose as a high quality functioning office block. The improved design will also have a better impact upon the surrounding features than currently. Overall, this 'Vision' aligns with the strategic approach to sustainable development set within Local Plan policy SD1 and the CAAP.

## Proposal

5.4 This full planning application is for external façade repairs to include the partial replacement of cladding, full replacement of windows and provision of new atrium and replacement canopy (see Figure 21 & 22).

5.5 The development will result in the replacement the majority of the existing doors, windows and plant.

5.6 The proposal also involves a new entrance to the offices with a more elegant canopy and a triple height reception area. This will make more of a differentiation with the station entrance and so make the new entrance significantly more legible. The material comprising the canopy above the main entrance will be extended in height by two stories and reduced in depth (see figure 19 & 20).

5.7 Vents are proposed on the north-west elevation to provide an efficient air conditioning and ventilation system.

5.8 Internally, new facilities will be provided to regenerate the office use including a replacement heating and cooling system and upgraded WC facilities. Other internal improvements include an improved fire detection system. The proposal will also incorporate improvements to the energy efficiency of the building. Planning permission is not required or sought for these internal alterations.

5.9 The national rail symbol located at the top of the south-east elevation will not be removed as a result of development.

5.10 The existing free standing generator (and enclosure

with 2m high perimeter fencing) on the site will also be removed.

5.11 The red line boundary of the site does not include the Swindon Station Main Car Park. This car park was originally built to serve Signal Point. When office space is rented in Signal Point, some car parking spaces in the Swindon Station Main Car Park may need to be allocated for the occupants. This strategy ensures that parking currently available to the public will only be lost when/ if necessary and therefore demonstrates compliance with policies CAAP 1 & 5.

5.12 The proposal will not materially alter the use of the building (which is explained in section 2) or its potential impact on surrounding areas when compared with the current position. The retained uses on the ground floor accord with policies CAAP 1 & 16.

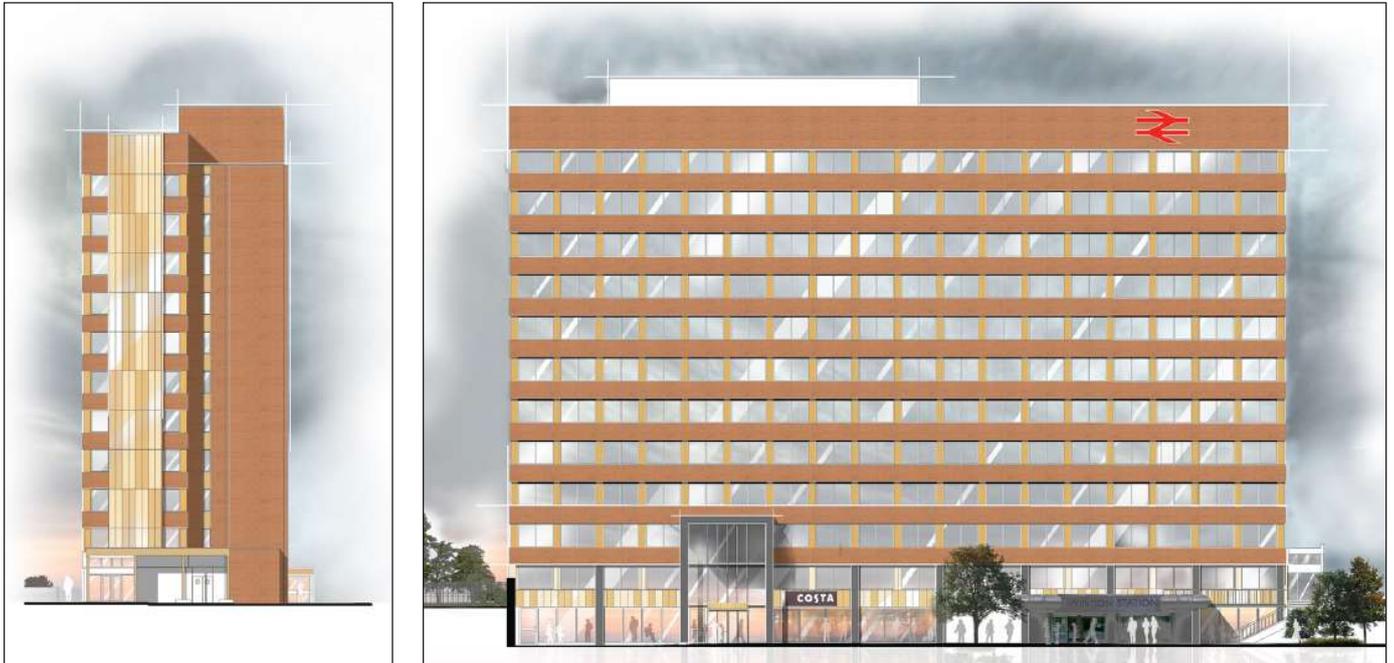


▲ Figure 19 | Proposed Ground Floor



▲ Figure 20 | Proposed Sections through the Lobby Entrance

# 5.0 Development Proposal



▲ Figure 21 | Proposed North East and Front Elevations



▲ Figure 22 | Proposed South West and Rear Elevations

# 6.0

## Design Rationale

# 6.0 Design Rationale

6.1 The design rationale responds to the planning policy and guidance requirements in combination with a thorough understanding of the site context. This section discusses in detail the appearance and materials, landscape, access and sustainability. It also provides planning policy analysis on the detailed matters of the development proposal.

## Appearance and materials

6.2 The existing building provides a distinctive and visible landmark and is an important civic location. Therefore the proposed design has been developed to ensure that the building envelope is sensitively refurbished. This will involve the removal and replacement of existing ad-hoc, low quality and poorly co-ordinated building materials around all of the building's facades, with an attractive and contemporary composition of materials.

6.3 The most notable will be the replacement of the existing brown profiled cladding with vertical lined Bronze metallic panels. These are proposed on the first two floors of the south-east elevation and vertical sections on each of the three remaining elevations. This will form a distinctive identity and character.

6.4 High quality, durable and easily maintained materials will be chosen for the building envelope. The proposed cladding materials around the building have been chosen carefully to be in harmony with the character of the area including commercial buildings adjacent to Signal Point. Therefore, the element of the proposals complies with Local Plan policies DE1 & SC2, policies CAAP 1 & 16 and chapter 12 of the revised NPPF.

6.5 All windows will be replaced with higher quality, modern double glazed windows to significantly improve the aesthetics and energy efficiency of the building. These new windows will have aluminium powder coated frames and will be two paned with one pane openable and the other fixed.

6.6 The proposed vents would be of a colour to match with the proposed cladding material in an attempt to modernise Signal Point. These vents are of similar but more subtle design to those neighbouring commercial

buildings such as the SN1 building to the south.

6.7 A new, triple height glazed curtain wall will form the new entrance on the south-west elevation with a triple height atrium to the reception area. The existing heavy looking canopy will be replaced by a more elegant canopy, which will replicate the height of the atrium and will be pulled closer to the building. The entrance demonstrates compliance with policy CAAP 1. Figure 23 are images of the existing canopy.

6.8 The materials proposed to be used are of a higher quality and are of a significantly more modern design when compared to the existing materials. The proposal will therefore accord with Local Plan policies DE1 & SC1, policies CAAP 1 & 16 and chapter 12 of the revised NPPF. The improvement in appearance may result in increased economic activity within Signal Point and boost civic pride as suggested by the Swindon Design Guide. As a result, the proposals would accord with Local Plan policies SD3 & SC2 and policy CAAP 16 and this direction is supported by chapter 6 of the revised NPPF.

6.9 The proposed materials, overall appearance and architectural improvements will ensure a more positive impact upon the nearby heritage assets and their setting when compared to the existing situation. The proposal would therefore accord with Local Plan policy EN10 and adopted Swindon Design Guide.

6.10 Section 2 of this statement notes the heritage assets and their significance within their setting. This significance is primarily about the collective functionality of the heritage assets and their contribution to the Great Western Railway. Therefore improvements to Signal Point's appearance will have a positive impact upon the significance of the heritage assets and their setting.

6.11 It is considered that the proposed appearance of Signal Point is in-keeping with the office/medium-rise buildings in the site's immediate vicinity and it will ensure that the proposed appearance of Signal Point will make it one of the most modern looking buildings in the town centre. Therefore, the proposal will have a positive impact on the general character of the area. The development



▲ Figure 23 | Existing canopy at Signal Point

# 6.0 Design Rationale

would comply with Local Plan policy DE1, policy CAAP 1 and chapter 12 of the NPPF. The proposed internal alterations and additions to the building will be detailed and finished in a contemporary manner with a simple, colour palette and contemporary forms. High quality, durable and easily maintained materials will be chosen for internal finishes to complete this concept. Spaces in the existing buildings will be refurbished and receive similar treatment so that the new and existing spaces form a coherent internal environment with considerable character. The improvements will create an excellent working environment.

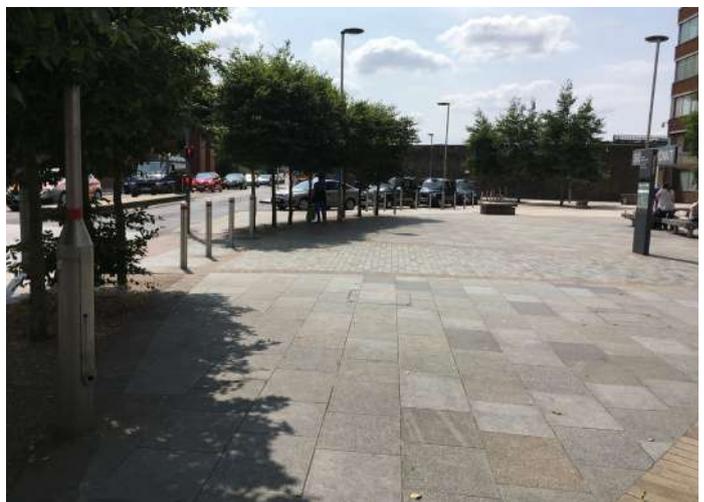
## Landscaping

6.12 The public realm of the train station forecourt has recently been significantly upgraded at a cost of nearly £2million. This included full pavement reconstruction with natural stone finishes and new benches and trees. It also included a redesigned taxi rank and a new drop-off laybay. These landscaping improvements provide an attractive forecourt to the train station and Signal Point.

6.13 Signal Point frames this public realm and the proposed architectural improvements and materials being used will result in a crisp, clean feel and create a positive sense of place. The improvements to Signal Point will help to improve the setting of the recent public realm improvements. It will also ensure that the 'Station Arrival Quarter' and the 'gateway to the town centre' becomes even more attractive for workers and visitors.



▲ Figure 24 | Jubilee Clock outside Signal Point



▲ Figure 25 | New landscaping outside Signal Point

# 6.0 Design Rationale

6.14 Figure 24,25,26 and 27 provide images of these public realm improvements.

## Access

6.15 Access into Signal Point will be as per the current arrangements with the main pedestrian access being through the building's ground floor entrance on the south-east elevation. This ensures compliance with policy CAAP 1. Adjacent to this entrance is the separate pedestrian access to the shop/café units.

6.16 Access for staff (only) working at Signal Point will also continue to be available via the rear access point, however this access point will also be refurbished and modernised.

6.17 The site will still be accessible through the public



▲ Figure 26 | Taxi rank outside Signal Point



▲ Figure 27 | Drop-off layby

transport and drop-off modes as noted within section 2 of this document. Pedestrian access into the taxi control office and rank on the first floor of the north-east elevation is also to be retained.

6.18 Vehicular access and parking to the site will also be retained with the Swindon Station Main Car Park providing parking for new occupants of the office building if required.

6.19 It must also be recognised that non-car journeys to the site will be attractive to the potential occupants due to the very close proximity to the train and bus stations.

## Sustainability

6.20 This proposal provides a long term future for a significant building that is recognised as part of Swindon's townscape. The improved design will help to provide a more attractive civic landmark for the town.

6.21 Sustainability principles and the mitigation of climate change have been taken into account throughout the design. The proposed development incorporates measures to reduce energy consumption.

6.22 The current windows are single paned whereas the proposed are double glazed. Providing double glazed windows is now standard practice in order to reduce heat loss/ solar gain. Therefore, the proposals comply with Local Plan policy DE2.

6.23 The proposed heating/cooling will consist of air conditioning units. Air conditioning plant will be discretely located on the roof of the building.

6.24 Overall, the sustainability of the proposed development with respect to environmental matters would be an improvement on the existing situation through the use of improved features and materials. As a result, the proposed changes to Signal Point would result in an overall sustainability improvement when considered against the requirements of Local Plan policy DE1, DE2 and policy CAAP 1.

# 7.0

## Conclusion

# 7.0 Conclusion

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- 7.1 Signal Point is a tired and underused building in a highly visible and accessible location in Swindon town centre. The proposal will significantly improve its external appearance and the modernisation of Signal Point will help to encourage economic activity within the building and direct business activity towards the Railway Station Quarter.
- 7.2 The proposed development will enrich its physical environment and provide a valuable reference point that will enhance the legibility of the area and contribute to the townscape of this part of Swindon.
- 7.3 The 'Vision' underpinning the proposal is one of rejuvenation and sustainability. The proposed materials and their layout will modernise Signal Point which will respond positively with the nearby heritage assets and the town centre setting. The proposal also incorporates energy saving design techniques.
- 7.4 The proposed development accords with the Development Plan. Also, it will help to achieve the aims and objectives for the Railway Station Quarter outlined in the 'Swindon 2020: Masterplan review and delivery plan' and is in line with the Swindon Design Guide and the revised NPPF.
- 7.5 The proposed development will have positive impacts on the three tenets of sustainable development. This is discussed further below:
- 7.6 The improvement of the design of Signal Point encourages the reuse of it which in turn would help strengthen economic activity within Swindon. This is without compromising the existing uses. The proposal will have a positive economic impact.
- 7.7 A higher quality external appearance of the building will invoke a positive sense of place and civic pride. It will improve the setting of the attractive public realm outside of Swindon station and may help to improve the custom of other uses in close proximity to Signal Point such as the coffee shop on the ground floor. It may also help to attract new businesses/ uses to the 'Station Arrival Quarter'. The proposal will have a positive social impact.
- 7.8 The proposals would have a more positive impact on the heritage assets and character and appearance of the area when compared to the existing situation. Furthermore, the proposed sustainable building features would result in a significantly energy efficient building.
- 7.9 The proposed development will result in positive economic, social and environmental impacts. It will significantly improve the appearance of this highly prominent building, as well as bringing it back into productive use and thereby utilising a currently vacant asset.
- 7.10 It is hoped that this planning application is received positively and be seen as a good news story for the town.

## Economic

- 7.6 The improvement of the design of Signal Point encourages the reuse of it which in turn would help strengthen economic activity within Swindon. This is without compromising the existing uses. The proposal will have a positive economic impact.

## Social

- 7.7 A higher quality external appearance of the building will invoke a positive sense of place and civic pride. It will improve the setting of the attractive public realm outside of Swindon station and may help to improve the custom of other uses in close proximity to Signal Point such as the coffee shop on the ground floor. It may also help to attract new businesses/ uses to the 'Station Arrival Quarter'. The proposal will have a positive social impact.

## Environmental

- 7.8 The proposals would have a more positive impact on the heritage assets and character and appearance of the area when compared to the existing situation. Furthermore, the proposed sustainable building features would result in a significantly energy efficient building.

