CONSERVATION CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Wiltshire Council
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To: **Amy Houldsworth**

Ref: ENQ/2023/00336

Location: The Chantry, Vicarage Road, Tisbury

Proposals: Internal alterations and rear extension and new dormer plus demolition of a chimney

Comments by: Jocelyn Sage

Date: 21 March 2023 and at 9 May 2023

The Chantry is a grade II listed building within the Tisbury Conservation Area. We have been supplied with a heritage report (Simul Consultants) which is helpful at this early stage. It explans that Doves and The Chantry were originally one buiding which were divided internally about 1880. The heritage report says that '*The whole of the house was likely to have been originally a farm with the rear ranges of workshops and outbuildings*'.

Of particular note I take from the report:

Part of a group of heritage assets which contribute to the visual and historical significance of Tisbury conservation area.

And

Interior plan form which demonstrates the phases of historic development

The report says that it is a *'semi-detached dwelling which has been rebuilt in the late 18th century but probably dates from the 1650s.'*

Section 4 says *'Internally the Georgian part of the house of both ground and first floor is still largely intact with its early joinery features, fireplaces and plan form to the bedrooms. At attic level this is more utilitarian with new dormer joinery'.*

At the rear gound level the lean-to kitchen is possibly late 19th century following sub-division in about 1880 with its earlier construction fabric surviving - floor flags and fireplace; but the windows altered and the passage door to the courtyard re-purposed.

Legislative Framework

Section 66 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 says:

'In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting , the local planning authority….shall have special regard to the desirability of presering the building or its setting or any features of special architectual or historic interest which it possesses'.

Section 72

with respect of any buildings or land in a conservation area...special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

Paragraph 197 a of the NPPF says:

'In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation'.

Making Changes to Heritage Assets (HE guidance)

Para 25 '*Restoration works are those that are intended to reveal or recover something of significance that has been eroded, obscured or previously removed. In some cases, restoration can thus be said to enhance significance. However, additions and changes in response to the changing needs of owners and occupants over time may themselves be a key part of the asset's significance'*.

And

Para 45 '*The plan form of a building is frequently one of its most important characteristics and internal partitions, staircases and other features are likely to form part of its significance'*.

Proposals

Ground floor proposals

Works essentially relate to the rear extension (lafter 1880) including loss of plan form and loss of rear wall. Also a chimney stack (external) is removed in order to install double-doors (to what will be the snug).

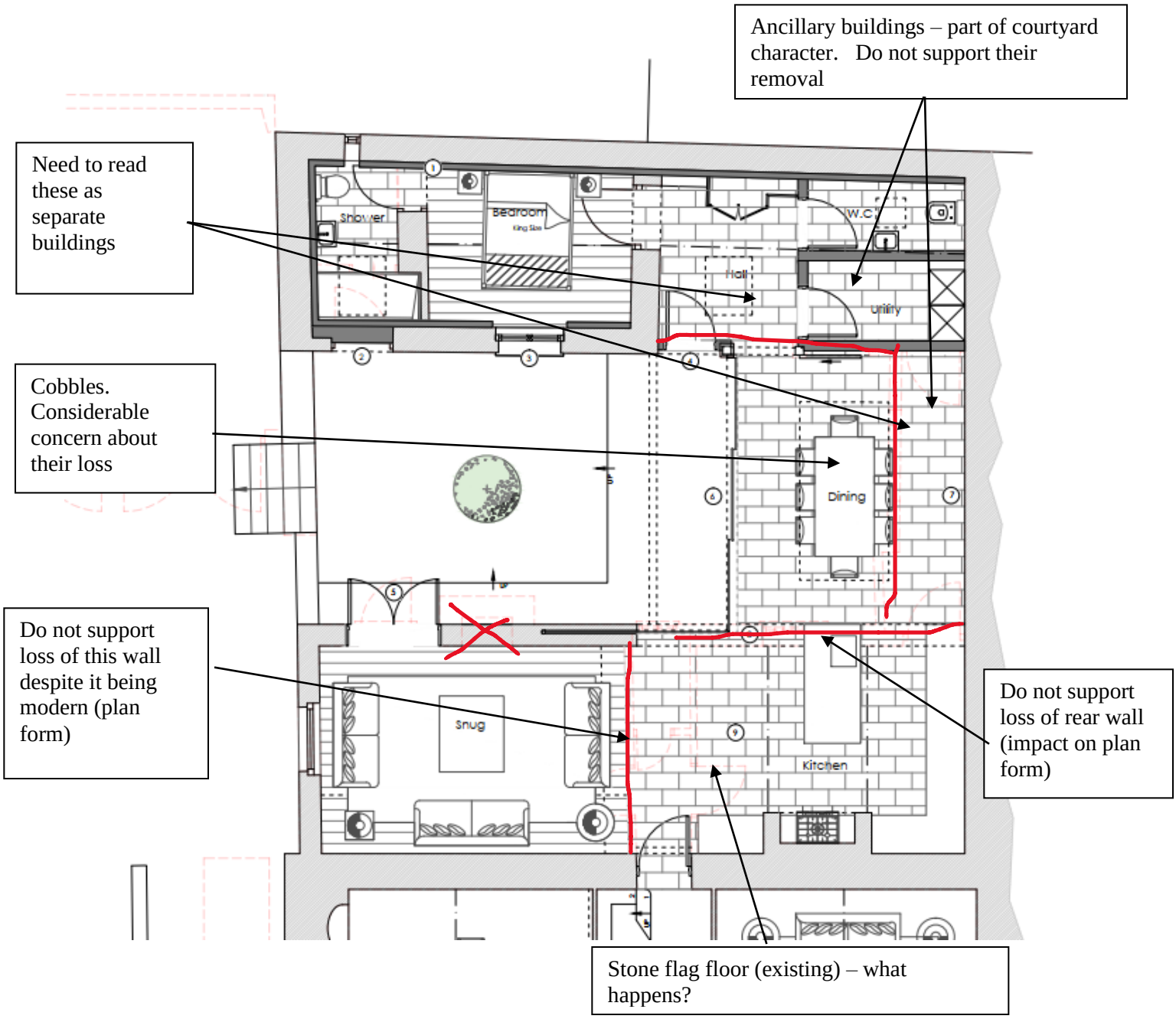
This extension was required when house was subdivied and as such, is an important part of the evolution of the building. As such, I have reservations.

The proposals would also subsume, into something much more grandiose, a series of outbuildings together with the infiling of a courtyard. The ecclectic mix of structures arranged around a courtyard, together with the cobbled floor, have a strong and disinct character which the proposal would sweep away. As such, I have reservations.

I would strongly recommend this aspect is reconsidered: in particular that the chimney is retained, that the partition wall (diviing hall from living space) is retained (even if it is modern, it retains the cellular character of the space) that the kitchen wall (rear) is retained, that the form of the 'hall' (alongside the party wall and at the end) is retained and also consideration is given to the treatment of the flooring.

Where is the dresser and what happens to it?

No proposals in respect of the ground floor of the original cottage.



First floor proposals

Originally the first floor was contained within the core of the earlier building. It has subsequently been extended with dormers to form an en-suite and bathroom (which involved creating two openings in original rear wall).

The proposal is now for a further (third) dormer and another opening in the original rear wall. Visually: three dormers rather than two so a minor visual change as one assumes it is within the existing loft space. Slight reservations about loss of historic fabric in respect of creating an opening in the original rear wall to access the new en-suite.

Of greater concern, however, is a note on the proposed plan which says: '*Consider thermal upgrades to external wall with use of breatheable conservation products such as wood fibre and lime plaster'*.

Retofitting listed buildings needs to be done in a considered holistic way and following good analysis of the energy performance of the whole building and its consituent parts. Retrofitting the first floor is potentially very impactful ie impact on door architraves, windows, skirting boards, fire surrounds, ceilings etc. I am unlikely to support this unless it can be demonstrated that it has no harmful impact on elements of significance (and in this respect, I note

that the heritage statement *'Some verey good interior heritage fabric to the front range with original four panel Georgian doors, H hinges, staircase, cupboard joinery, panelling, plasterwork, window shutters and fireplaces'*.

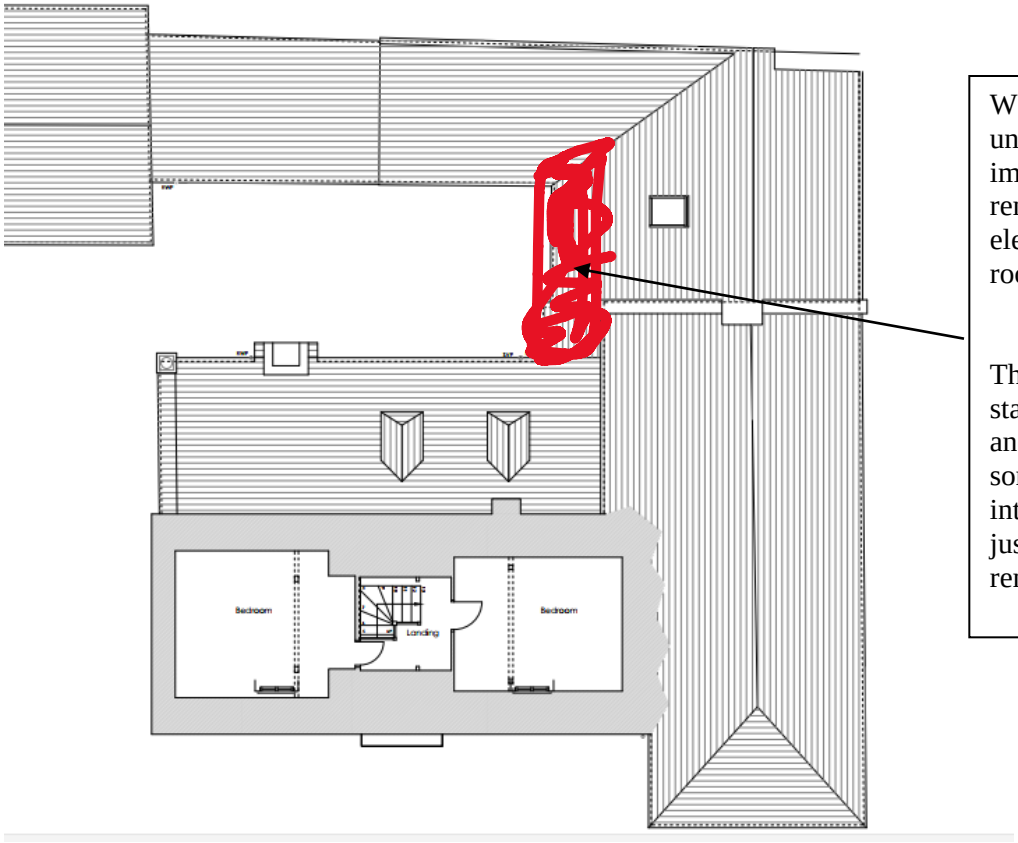
Second Floor plan

No change

Roof plan

Flat roof structure with lantern light in 'courtyard' and adjacent roof cut back. Aside from that, an additional couple of studio lights and proposed demolition of a chimney.

As noted above, I have reservations about the loss of the courtyard/farmyard character (together with the traditional flooring):



Want to better understand the impact of the removal of this element of roof/structure

The heritage statement says c1900 and as such, it is of some historic interest. What is the justification for its removal?

Elevations

East (principal) – no change

South-West (side) – garage not shown (or is it demolished?). Flat-roofed single-storey structure inserted. A large chimney stack is demolished – this would appear to serve the snug f/p which is entirely removed. No objection on the understanding that it is a modern (21st century chimney).

North-West Courtyard elevation – Large external stack is removed (see above)

Conclusion

In conclusion, this house was not originally a grand house (its origins were a farmhouse) and it retains its farmhouse character at the rear. I consider this character to be a significant element of the interest of the listed building and blunty, I consider the proposals would eradicate this character through eroding the sense of a series of separate outbuildings around a courtyard (with attractive appropriate and original flooring) **and as such, I would not support the proposals as currently presented.**

I also have reservations about the erosion of plan form (and I concur with your heritage consultant's assessment of significance which includes *'Interior plan form which demonstrates the phases of historic development'*).. The 1880s extension is a key aspect of the building's significance, explaining how the building functioned when it was separated from next door. I am unlikely to support the loss of key partition walls and the rear walls. In respect of a future application, I note that the heritage statement refers to a stone flag floor. I would expect this to be retained and would want to know how a new floor would intersect with this floor.

In respect of the first floor, I have no objection in principle to the new dormer and creation of an en-suite although this would result in the loss of important historic fabric to form a doorway and would need to be justified.

In respect of the suggested retrofit of the first floor of the 'original' house, I would need more information on its potential impact on historic features. As it stands, it is something I am unlikely to support as I consider it would be invasive and the justification insufficiently weighted in terms of the benefits (the NPPF talks about public benefits. Energy savings in respect of a private residence would not meet that criteria).

In the attic space, the heritage statement refers to removing ceilings to a create a vaulted space. **This is unlikely to be supported** (impact on character setting aside potential impact on historic fabric).

There are references to restorations etc. Replacement windows would require LBC (ie attic floor dormer windows). Greater clarification should be provided as to what 'restorations' covers. Also the heritage statement refers to a '*new oak frame garden building'*. This would require planning permission and would be considered in the light of its impact on the setting of the listed building.

Finally, whilst there are considerable adverse impacts in respect of the proposals, I see no positives. For example, the existing building has a concrete roof, as does one of the courtyard buildings (the heritage statement talks about the courtyard building being reslated but there is no note on the drawings to suggest this). Offering the retiling of the roof with clay tiles would be an enhancement that could be balanced against the negatives (such as the doorway into the en-suite). Given the scale of the proposals, this would seem to be a relatively modest 'gesture'.

Comments at 9 May with revised proposals

Following the site visit, the architect sent revised proposals (Simon'e email dated 26/4) saying (my comments in red):

Further to our discussions, please find attached revised drawings with the following changes:

- *It was agreed that the chimney serving the Snug fireplace was a modern addition and this can be removed* Agreed
- *Dividing wall between Kitchen & Snug retained and folding screen introduced.* Discussed and agreed. In due course, an internal elevational detail will be required.
- *Rear Kitchen wall is retained and opening between Kitchen & infill extension is much reduced in width* This seems like an acceptable compromise and it lines up with the fireplace. I would like some expression of this former wall on the floor.
- *It was agreed that there was little heritage merit to the quality of the brickwork wall forming the 'hall' between the Kitchen & outbuildings and this could be removed* Agreed
- *The existing flagstones in the Kitchen & existing 'hall' are to be retained, lifted & reset insitu.* It is likely that we will require a detailed recording of the existing together with a method statement for the lifting and relaying.
- *We discussed the cobbled finish in the courtyard and how they could be retained within the new infill extension. We would like to retain these cobbles, retain, lift & reset insitu if possible.* OK, well it is the 'if possible' that needs to be bottomed out. I would not support a proposed extension in this location **if** the cobbles cannot be retained. This is therefore critical. I strongly recommend exploring this detail now.
- *Concrete tiles to the outbuildings will be replaced with natural slate to match existing.*
- *We discussed the new flat roof over the infill extension and we propose this to be a lead roof, cutting back the pitched tile roof to allow for this.*
- *We discussed the moving of the ensuite access in the eastern bedroom and you were comfortable with the relatively low loss in fabric here given the relatively modern pediment joinery elements, retention of historic joinery where possible. You were also comfortable with the insertion of a new doorway into the new ensuite from the western bedroom. These have been retained in the proposals.*
- *There were reservations regarding the installation of thermal upgrade measures to the first floor bedrooms, as such these have been removed from the proposals*
- *There were reservations regarding the removal of the flat ceiling sections in the attic rooms, as such these will be retained as part of the proposals*
- *We discussed the attic dormer windows and you would be happy to see new, sympathetically detailed dormer windows installed with slimlite double glazing in flush timber casement windows.*
- *As discussed on site, the adjacent modern garage building is to be removed.*
- *We will show further details of the proposed garden building as part of the full planning & listed building application*
- *We will also show proposals to refurbish the greenhouse building into an external store with solid roof, and removal of the modern portico structure*

We discussed the two doors that are either end of the linking corridor. I would wish to see the door at the kitchen end retained and blocked off on one side. Retaining the door in situ would provide evidence of the former linking corridor. Similarly the stone flags in this area should be retained (Lifted and relaid as per the other stone flags. You do show them on your drawing so this is welcomed). I am inclined to think that the corresponding door (proposed to be removed as utility goes there) should also be left in situ.

The downstairs guest bedroom shows the walls lined but I thought we discussed leaving the outer wall (courtyard facing one) unlined, given this was a room likely to have occasional use?

Missed opportunity not to replace the concrete roof tiles on the main roof? I think this is something you need to reconsider. If a solution cannot be found for retaining the cobbles where you are proposing the extension, you may want to offer other conservation benefits to offset the harm. The retiling of the principle roof may be one that weights the balance in your client's favour given it does not have to be done as part of the package of works.