Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

11 July 2023

Officer's Name: Lucy Rutter-Dowd
Officer's Title: Planning Officer

Fiona Webb
Senior Conservation Officer (Consultant)
Wiltshire Council Conservation (Central)

Application No: **PL/2023/02515 & PL/2023/02894**
Change of use of former stable and coach house to provide ancillary residential accommodation for Shaw Farm (part retrospective); associated changes to the building to facilitate the change.
SHAW FARM, NEW TOWN, STANTON ST BERNARD, MARLBOROUGH, SN8 4LU

Please find following comments in respect of the above application(s).

Recommendations:

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

This is my second consultation response. There appears to have been no material changes since my earlier comments dated 4 May 2023. As such I am happy with this proposal and my previous comments as set out below remain relevant.

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

Policy: From the point of view of the historic environment the main statutory tests are set out within the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Sections 16 (LBC) and 66 (PP) require that **special regard** be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

The NPPF outlines government policy, including its policy in respect of the historic environment. Section 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development. Paragraphs 201-3 of the NPPF require a balanced approach with any harm which would be caused being weighed against the potential public benefits which might be achieved. Paragraph 197 requires local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

National Planning Practice Guidance provides guidance on interpreting the NPPF.

The Council's Core Strategy 'Core Policy 58: Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment' requires that designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved and where possible enhanced. It is also required that distinctive elements of Wiltshire's historic environment, including non-designated heritage assets, which contribute to a sense of local character and identity will be conserved, and where possible enhanced.

The Council's Core Strategy CP 57: Ensuring high quality design requires a high quality of design in all new developments. Proposals are required to "demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through:

i. enhancing local distinctiveness by responding to the value of the natural and historic environment, relating positively to its landscape setting and the existing pattern of development.…
ii. the retention and enhancement of existing important landscaping and natural features…
iii. responding positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting.

Site: range of stables and a coach house, Grade II listed building, the list description describes the building as dating from circa 1880 to 1890. The 'L' shaped building is an attractive mix of brick and tile and of a design characteristic of high status farm buildings from the late Victorian period.

Proposal: This proposal seeks to convert the former stables to a studio, bedroom and bathroom – with the accommodation fitted within the existing stalls. A new set of stairs would then lead to the attic accommodation above the coach house to allow this unused space to be used as a lounge and playroom. At ground floor level the coach house itself is currently in use as a gym and new bi-fold windows have been installed behind the original doors (as such the proposal also seeks to regularise the current situation).

Relevant planning history:

Issues: Impact on the significance of the listed building, impact on setting of listed building.

Assessment: Paragraph 194 requires that applicants describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. This should include sufficient information to provide a clear understanding of the significance of the heritage asset and its setting and the potential impact of any proposals on that significance. In this case, the applications are accompanied by a "Heritage, Design and Access Statement" which provides sufficient information to understand the impact of the proposals and is proportionate to their scope. The requirements of the NPPF are therefore met in this respect.

Within the stables at ground floor the proposal seeks to develop space for living accommodation around the historic stalls. This would see the stalls retained in situ with the rooms effectively replicating the historic layout of the stables. At the western end of the building the rooms would be in the areas contained by the stalls. At the eastern end a bedroom and bathroom would be created within the stalls, although walls would be built around them so as to create privacy within these rooms.

Within this section of the building the main changes proposed are a ‘floating’ floor and the provision of insulation between the existing sarking boards and a new layer of lime plaster. The change to the floor is proposed as the existing arrangement is not level and slopes down to a drainage channel. This design would leave the existing floor unaltered and ventilated whilst allowing for insulation to be provided as well as runs for sub-floor heating. As such, the work would be reversible with the historic floor remaining in place.

A similar arrangement is proposed for the roof, with insulation and a replacement ceiling created around the existing trusses. A new staircase is proposed at the eastern end of the stables which would provide access to the loft space above the coach house. This would utilise the existing opening which is presently accessed via a ladder. The provision of this staircase would require the removal of 3 ceiling joists but would not be significantly intrusive in terms of impact on the fabric of the building since these joists have been cut in the past so do not currently provide any significant tying capacity for the roof. This proposed alteration represents the only practical way to access the space.

The loft space already has sufficient space for the use proposed and has some natural light, although 6 conservation rooflights are proposed on the east facing roof slope in order to provide more daylight into the area. The one structural alteration which is required is the alteration of the truss across the coach house. It is proposed that the tie beam between the two queen posts be removed and replaced at a higher level so as to allow access underneath. This change would see an inverted ‘U’ shaped steel frame proposed to replace the horizontal collar in order to improve headroom.

Regarding the new conservation rooflights, it is proposed that these would be installed between the existing rafters, thereby minimising the historic fabric to be removed.

It is also proposed to change the ground floor of the coach house, where windows have been provided to create a space that is currently used as a gym. The original doors would remain in stitu, thus preserving the historic form and appearance of the building, with new, glazed doors to the rear, thus creating a liveable space and preventing weather ingress.

Overall it is considered that the design of the proposal has been carefully considered in order to retain the form and character of the listed building and minimise the impact on its historic fabric. The proposal would have limited harm to the building and this level of harm would be outweighed by the benefit of the building having a new use which will preserve its form and fabric for future generations.

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

Subject to the conditions set out below, the impact of the proposals on heritage assets will be neutral and the requirements of current conservation legislation, policy or guidance are considered to be met and there is therefore no objection to the approval of the application.

Conditions:

- Level 3 historic building recording before commencement of works to be carried out and submitted for approval prior to commencement of works
- All materials
- Scaled drawing of proposed staircase
- Surface treatment of the stalls and internal joinery items
- Details of conservation rooflights
- Details of metal vents
- Details of internal lime plaster
- Details of insulation
- Fixing details of floating floor
- Details of extractors, flues and vents and pipe runs