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Heritage Statement for retrospective change of use from a 10 bed HMO (Sui Generis) to 13 bed HMO (Sui Generis) at Touchdown House, 156 High Street, Royal Wootton Bassett

1. Site Description

Touchdown House, 156 High Street, Royal Wootton Bassett is a Grade II Listed property that gained consent for conversion to a 10 bed HMO which was implemented. However, further alterations have been undertaken which are sought to be regularised by way of this retrospective application.

The building is two-storey (plus basement level accommodation and attic level accommodation in the roof space) within the settlement limits of Royal Wootton Bassett. The property is located in the Royal Wootton Bassett Conservation Area.

2. Heritage asset and setting

Historic England Listing Description

The property was listed on the 17th January 1955.

U 08 SE WOOTTON BASSETT HIGH STREET (south east side)

11/162 No 156

17.1.55

II

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House, C18 altered C19. Diaper brick, C20 tiled roof with 2 hipped dormers. 2 storey and attic, gable stacks. Triple gabled rear extensions, all of one bay. Wide elevation, 1st and 3rd bays with square stone bay windows with columns and pierced parapets and 2- pane plate glass sashes. Door, 6-panelled with radial fanlight and open dentilled pediment on columns. Upper windows 4-pane sashes with chamfered stone lintels and sills.

Listing NGR: SU0662282413

Conservation Area

The site is also located within the Royal Wootton Bassett Conservation Area

3. The significance of the heritage asset

The significance of the listed Touchdown House and its surroundings within the Conservation Area as designated heritage assets is not questioned. The building and its surroundings have clear architectural and historic interest. The development of the building and extension can be easily read. The previous application included a detailed assessment of the development of the building and is not repeated within this document. The Royal Wootton Bassett Conservation Area has significance retaining the architectural and historic record of the development of the wider town.

4. The proposed works

The works seek retrospective permission for the increase in bedrooms to 13 from 10 and the inclusion of one additional en-suite and slight relocation of one proposed en-suite. The additional bedrooms were created within existing rooms with no alterations required, only utilising spaces previously identified as studies, lounge and a kitchenette. A main shared living space has been created in the basement level with an existing lightwell, whilst the main communal kitchen and utility remains at ground floor level.

5. Policy Context

National Policy

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The NPPF was first published in March 2012, replacing a significant proportion of government planning policy with immediate effect. The NPPF has since been revised and alterations were adopted in July 2021. The intention of this document is to outline core planning policy within the UK and inform local planning guidance and supplementary documents. In this instance local planning guidance comes under the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Section 16 of the NPPF addresses policy for the conservation and management of the historic environment. This document has been created with the awareness that 'the level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.' (Paragraph 194).

Paragraph 197 states that 'in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of: (a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; (b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and (c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.'

Paragraph 199 states 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. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'.

Paragraph 200 explains that 'any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing evidence'.

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Paragraphs 206-207 concern new development within Conservation Areas and within the setting of heritage assets and stated that 'Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably… not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance.

Local Policy

Wiltshire Core Strategy - Core Policy 58 – Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment

6. Impact on significance

The only external change is the retention of an existing window opening inside bedroom 5, to the side elevation of Beamans Lane. The retention of the existing window would ensure that the Conservation Area character and significance would not be harmed.

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Side window was retained inside bedroom 5 on the first floor.

Internally, stud wall partitioning was installed inside bedroom 6 to create an en-suite bathroom. This would be fully reversible and would not impact upon historic fabric and as such no harm would result. All plumbing was run between the floor joists to minimise the impact on the historic fabric.

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Repositioned en-suite bathroom to bedroom 6.

In bedroom 8, the proposed en-suite is partially relocated. This did not impact on the historic fabric. As such it is considered that this would be considered to result in less than substantial harm and a neutral impact on the significance of the Listed Building.

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En-suite bathroom repositioned to bedroom 8.

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A kitchenette previously approved is changed to form a bedroom inside bedroom 8.

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Previously approved bedroom inside bedroom 8 is extra living accommodation.

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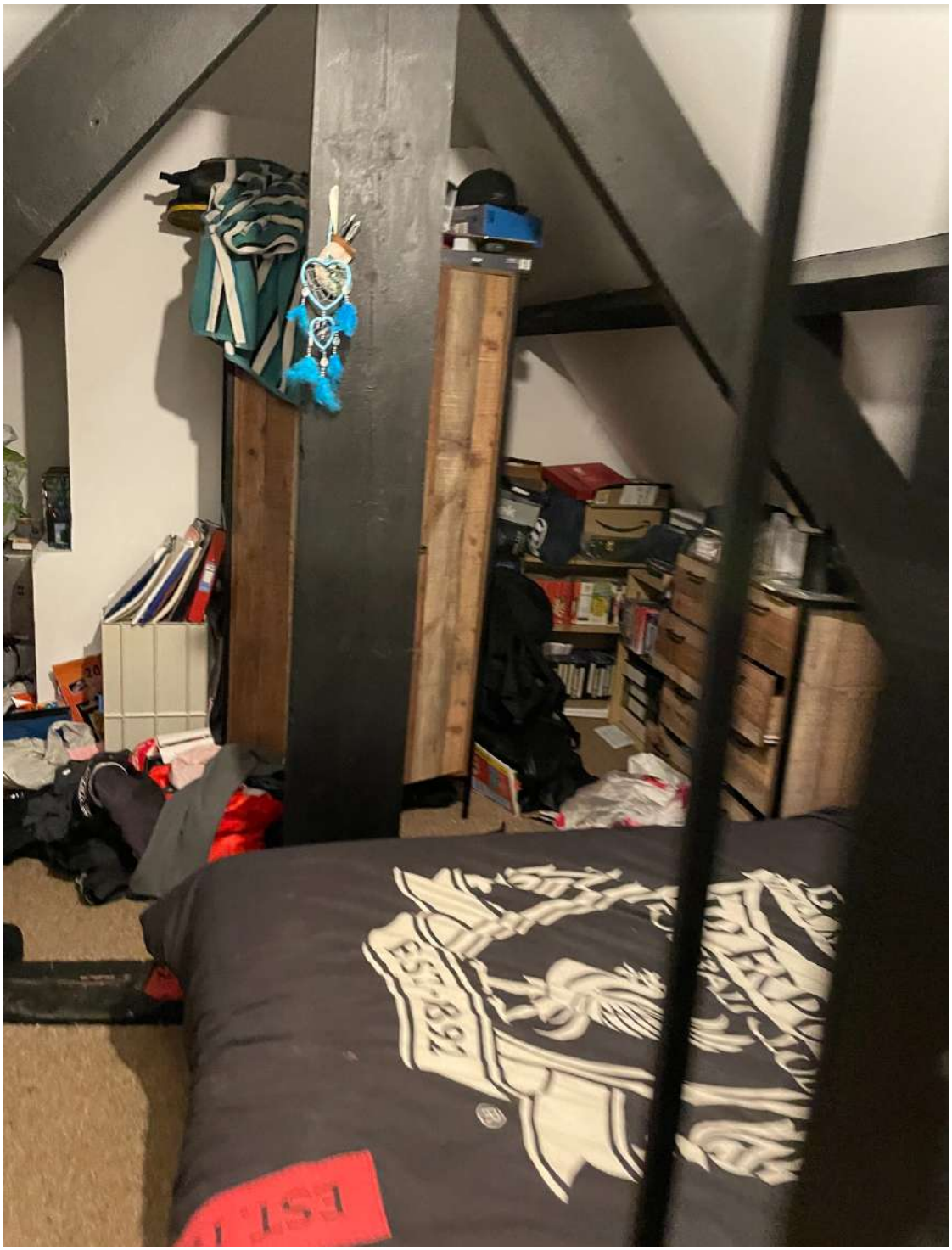

Previously approved study on the second floor is bedroom 13.

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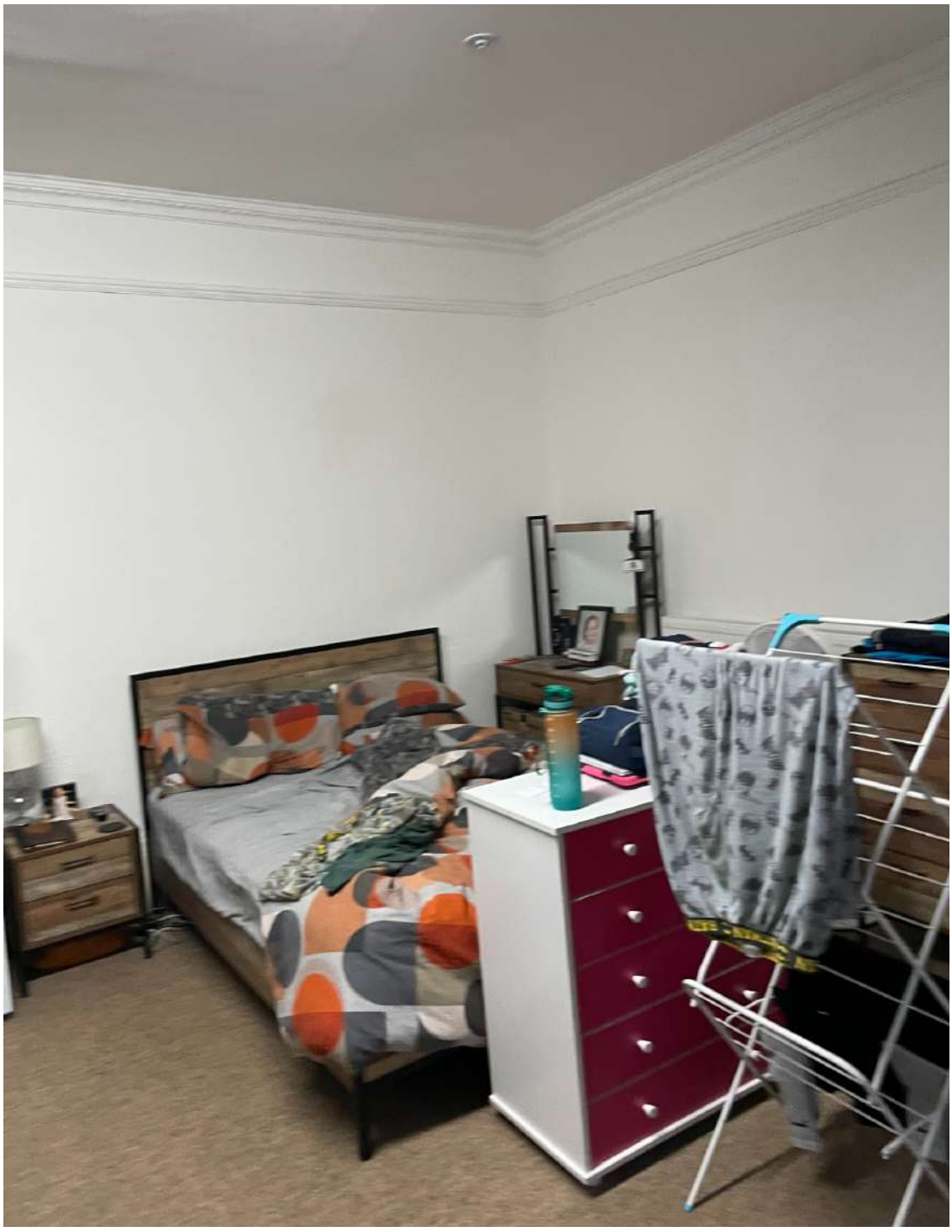

Previously approved lounge on the ground floor is bedroom 11.

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Previously approved study on the ground floor is bedroom 12.

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Previously approved storage in the basement is converted as communal living with a lightwell in the corner.

7. Enhancement and Public Benefits

The proposals have been designed to minimise the impact on historic fabric while providing an increased level of residential accommodation within a sustainable settlement. The additional occupants may result in an increased need for refuse storage and parking spaces of which there is sufficient space to accommodate additional facilities if needed, without effecting on the character and appearance of the area.

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