Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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

Officer's Name: Ruaridh O'Donoghue
Officer's Title: Planning Officer

Application No: **PL/2023/06387**
Change of use from resource centre for children and families to residential.
Melbourne House, Melbourne Place, Devizes, SN10 2AB

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

Recommendations:

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

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.

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: The property is a Grade II listed building.

Proposal:

Relevant planning history: E/10/1330/FUL – Change of use from residential use (C3) to a resource centre for children and families (approved); K/34912 – Change of use to residential (approved).

Issues: Impact on the significance of the 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, no Heritage Statement or Design & Access Statement have been submitted with the application and as such it fails to meet the requirements of the NPPF.

Melbourne House is a Grade II listed building sited on the south side of the Nursery (which is the name for the part of the main A361 outside of the site) some 60m to the east of the entrance to Browfort. Vehicular access to the site is from the A361 via a private driveway between two terraces of houses, Farleigh Place to the west and Melbourne Place to the east.
Melbourne House is large 3 storey dwelling constructed of ashlar under a slate roof. A twostorey red brick annex was added in 1981. The house is orientated in a such way that it 'turns it back' on the dwellings on The Nursery with the main aspect to the south facing towards the Kennet and Avon Canal. The dwelling's garden extends down to the canal whilst the Quakers Meeting Room is situated on a lower level to the west of the site and a group of three modern dwellings (Melbourne Mews) are sited to the east, taking advantage of the views of the canal.

The proposal is to change the use of this resource centre used for children and families to residential. Whilst in principle this may be acceptable (since it was the original use of the building), no plans have been submitted showing how this proposal would impact on the proposed use of the listed building. This is a totally inadequate level of information in order to assess this proposal.

As such a Heritage Statement is requested that accords to Paragraph 194 of the NPPF and drawings that show any alterations to the plan form and elevations.

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.

The following further information is therefore requested:

i) Heritage Statement is requested that accords to Paragraph 194 of the NPPF;
ii) Drawings that show any alterations to the plan form and elevations of the listed building