Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

9 August 2023

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

Officer's Name: Jane Sanger
Officer's Title: Planning Officer

Application No: **PL/2023/06532 & PL/2023/06399**
Convert redundant farm stone barns into holiday let accommodation. Insertion of one new window, one new internal door opening and 4 conservation style rooflights into fabric. Rebuild chimney. Replace windows. New stud partitions to first floors.
Little Thornham Farm, Trowbridge Road, Seend, Melksham, SN12 6PQ

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

Recommendations:

X	No 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.

Site: The site is a Grade II listed stable and affects the setting of the main farmhouse which is also a Grade II listed building.

Proposal: The proposal seeks the conversion of the former farm building into a holiday let.

Relevant planning history: PL/2022/05945 and PL/2022/06239 – convert redundant farm store barns into holiday let (withdrawn)

Issues: Impact on the significance of the listed building; impact on the setting 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, the applications are accompanied by a "Design and Heritage 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.

However, paragraph 195 also provides for the local planning authority to make its own assessment of impact and the following heritage recommendations are offered on this basis.

The buildings are outbuildings to the historic farmstead and listed as late 18th early 19th stables and loft. It may have been built in 3 phases. It is mainly rubble stone with brick dressing and stone mullioned windows giving it a higher architectural status than some vernacular farm buildings. The southern section is clearly a former stable with the floor, evidence of the manager etc. The use of the northern section is more unknown but may have been a dairy room, although more recently referred to as a killing room maybe of chickens.

Whilst I appreciate the previous Conservation Officer didn't object to the principle of the conversion, I have numerous concerns regarding the details of this application which need to be addressed before my final assessment of this proposal. These are set out below (no order of priority):

- No sections have been provided showing head heights and existing and proposed floor levels
- No details have been provided regarding the existing stone floor in the former dairy or the proposed floors
- It would be preferable to have the bathroom in the area currently proposed as a utility room (since this would enable less subdivision of the upper floor and this to read more as originally intended). Soil and vent pipe will be required
- Please show all proposed flues, vents and extractors
- Details of boundary treatment (existing and proposed are required). The proposed close boarded fencing to the internal courtyard is not considered acceptable
- There is no justification as to why the concrete block rear extension is not being removed and the stable restored; this would allow the existing window to be retained and more light to enter the lounge
- The large escape window in the south elevation is not considered appropriate due to loss of historic fabric and the insertion of a new opening in this gable end. In

this respect, please see planning ref: 21/00026/LBC which was refused and dismissed at appeal. Has the option been explored of treating the existing pinching eye as an escape window?

- The number of conservation roof lights is considered excessive and could be reduced
- There are no details or justification for the works to the existing fireplace which is proposed to be a double sided chimney
- Dry lining of the internal works is considered unacceptable; previously the use of lime plaster was requested
- There is no information regarding the works necessary to the first floor joists and the repair of the ceiling below.
- Details are required for the insulation of the roof and its relationship with the rafters and purlins

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.

As such, further details and amendments are required in order for this application to be properly assessed.