Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Application No: **PL/2023/06494**
The construction of a workshop within the curtilage of a listed building
Bencroft House, Bencroft Hill, Stanley, Chippenham, SN15 3RQ

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

Recommendations:

	No Comment
	Support
	Support subject to conditions (please set out below)
	Object (for reasons set out below)
X	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: The construction of a workshop within the curtilage of a listed building

Relevant planning history: N/A

Issues: 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 application is accompanied by a "Design and Heritage Statement" which provides sufficient information to understand the impact of the proposal and is proportionate to the scope. The requirements of the NPPF are therefore met in this respect.

Bencroft House stands in an elevated and exposed position in Stanley village. It was originally built as a dairy farm in c.1700, as part of a loose courtyard plan, and has seen several alterations and additions throughout the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries before it was eventually broken-up into separate lots in 1972.

Bencroft House now consists of 4 principal buildings, a three-storey farmhouse including an attic floor with dormer windows, an open fronted cart shed, a stable block and a long cowhouse. The three latter buildings are arranged in an L-shaped configuration and form part of the eastern boundary of the application site. Access to the site is along the southern boundary from Stanley Lane.

This application seeks permission to construct a workshop building within the curtilage of Bencroft House. The building would be located in the north west corner of the site adjacent to an existing modern tennis court. The proposed materials would match the local agricultural vernacular – corrugated sheet roofing, weatherboard on brick plinth and unpainted joinery doors and windows. The building would be used for storage of gardening equipment and garden furniture, including basic joinery tools and workbench, whilst also being utilised to undertake repairs and general maintenance of building components relating to the house and other outbuildings as well as those around the garden.

The proposal would not be visible from the listed building and neighbouring properties, and would also have very limited views from the highway. There is no proposal or requirement for vehicular access.

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 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.