Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Officer's Title Planning Officer

Application No: **PL/2023/05952**

Demolition of timber garage, workshop, shed and partial demolition, repair and rebuilding of boundary walls and erection of new garage, workshop and gymnasium with associated works

Knapp Farmhouse, 1 High Lane, Broad Chalke, Salisbury, SP5 5HH

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

Recommendations:

	No comment
	Support in principle subject to amendments to the scheme (as set out below)
	Support subject to conditions (as set out below)
x	Object (for reasons set out below) in respect of the roadside (High Road) wall proposals
	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.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 also requires the Council to pay **special attention** to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of designated Conservation Areas.

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 Policy CP58 'Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment' requires that "designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance." 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.

Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy Policy CP57 'Ensuring high quality design and place shaping': A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality.

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 (amongst other things) "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" and "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."

Historic England Advice Note 2 – Making changes to Heritage Assets illustrates the application of policies set out in the NPPF in determining applications for PP and LBC.

Site and assets considered:

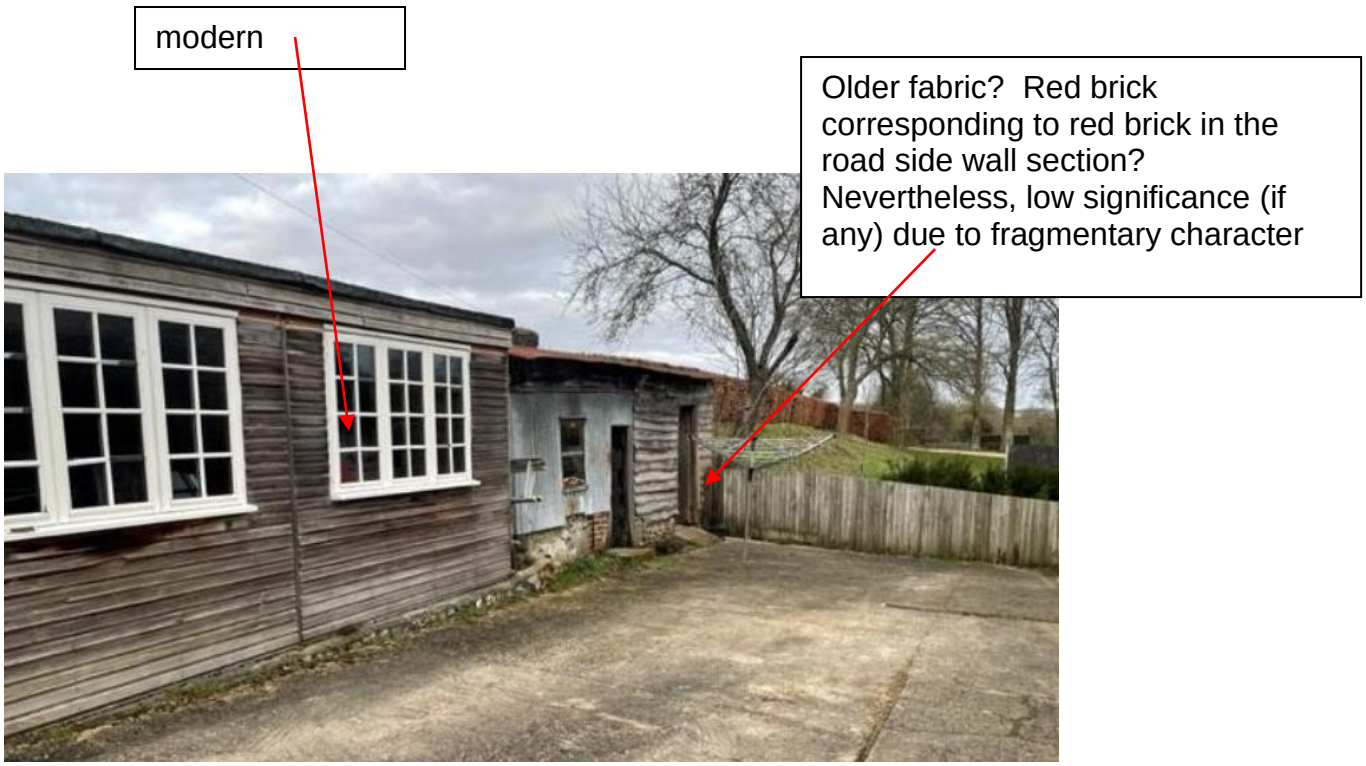
Knapp Farmhouse is a grade II listed building. The building has been the subject of a number of applications to extend it, particularly to the rear. Most recently, part of the site was separated and sold off. This part of the site had an access and garage which served Knapp Farmhouse.

Proposal:

The application seeks to form a driveway at the corner of the plot, install gates set back in the plot and to demolish two outbuildings and replace them with an enlarged structure to form a garage/workshop and cycle store and gym (largely within extension). In addition, the existing roadside wall would need to be rebuilt and stabilised. The heritage statement also refers to a new set of red brick piers at the east end of the site.

Issues: impact on the significance of the listed building (Knapp Farmhouse) and the conservation area. There is also the potential issue of whether the two structures are curtilage listed buildings. Certainly the walls are covered by the listing.

The map regression included in the heritage statement shows two structures in roughly the same position as the existing. However, the westerly building was hard up against the road and much narrower. The easterly building is more similar in position and dimensions to the existing. My suspicion is that this may be historic or contain some fabric which is historic so potentially this could be considered curtilage listed but not the more westerly one.



Information considered/provided: Paragraph 194 requires that applicants describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. This includes conservation areas which are heritage assets. In this particular case, the drawings are accompanied by a Design, Access and Heritage statement.

The report notes that:

'The extensive barns to the north and east of the main house were extant in 1948 as shown below but were demolished by David Hitchings. The enclosed courtyard formed by those barns disappeared at that time. A small courtyard remains between the extended house, thatched wall and tractor shed (Games Room / Pool House) with access through gates in the boundary stone walls to the junction of Knapp Hill and High Lane. The works which have gone on in the house and grounds over a 70 year period since 1950 have significantly altered the form and size of the original house and its relationship with many outbuildings most of which are now demolished'

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.

Assessment:

The buildings within the site to be demolished would appear (judging from the photographs as I have not visited in connection with this application) to be of no heritage interest although it is possible that fragments of historic fabric remain within one of the buildings. I do not consider the buildings to be of significance and have no objection to their demolition.

Replacement buildings. I have no objection to the proposed footprint nor design of the replacement buildings. Heed has been given to keeping their overall height low such that they will not be visible (or only a little) above the top of the newly rebuilt wall. The roof of the buildings will be mounted with solar panels. Providing they are not visible from the road, I have no objection.

Roadside wall. The existing roadside wall (High Road) has character and reflects different building phases – in particular the red brick. As such, as well as character, it has evidential value. The brickwork within the wall reflects the use of materials within the site. The proposed wall would be rebuilt in brick and stone

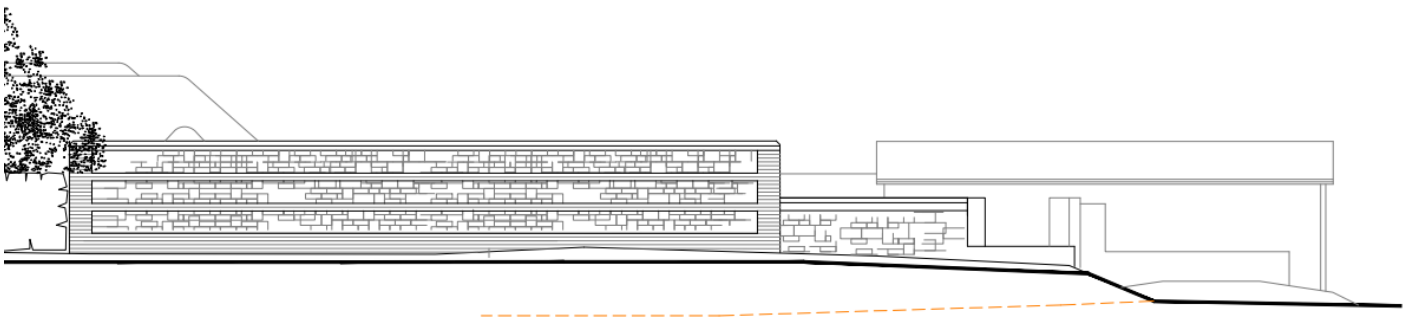
banding ie in a more formal arrangement. I am not clear what the capping would be. Could this please be clarified?



ROADSIDE WALL ELEVATION TO HIGH LAND WHICH IS TO BE REBUILT

The roadside wall steps down in height and it is worth noting that the existing buildings are not visible in views from the road. The intention is to raise the height of the central part of the wall (ie and remove one of the 'steps') so that there will only be two steps and the wall will be higher for a greater length.





The wall has been modified at the corner to create an access and gate set back in the plot. The loss of wall towards the former corner (not known when this was undertaken), results in a weak corner which diminishes the interest of what was formerly an enclosed courtyard.

Further down the lane (Knapp Hill) is a stone wall to the garden. This wall is largely greensand blocks of different sizes brought to course. The intention is to repair this wall. No objection provided an appropriate mortar (mix, colour and style) is used.

Summary & conclusion:

Section 66 of the Planning (LBCA) Act requires that when considering works to a listed building, or within its setting, the LPA shall have '*special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses*'.

Section 72 requires that works enhance or **preserve** the character of the conservation area.

I have no objection to the demolition and replacement of the two buildings with an L-shaped structure, nor to the repair of the greensand garden wall (Knapp Hill) but I do consider that the demolition of the roadside wall (High Lane) would be detrimental.

The significance of listed buildings relates in part to their character which derives from the use of traditional vernacular materials and the patina of age…. '*the surfaces , blemishes and undulations of old buildings speak of the passage of time and lives lived'*. (SPAB).

Historic England guidance in 'Principles of Repair of Historic Buildings' advises that '*A conservative approach is fundamental to good conservation – so retaining as much of the significant historic fabric and keeping changes to a minimum are of key importance when carrying out repair work to historic buildings. The unnecessary replacement of historic fabric, no matter how carefully the work is carried out, can in most situations have an adverse effect on character and significance'.*

The replacement wall would be much more regular and of a more formal character. It should be possible to repair the wall such that its idiosyncratic character is retained. This has been very effectively achieved recently in respect of the wall at St Lawrence's Downton. It may well be that the rebuilt wall is insufficiently robust enough, even after rebuilding, to act as the rear wall for the new buildings. Well then so be it. The harm in respect of the loss of the wall is not justified.

In terms of the level of harm, I would assess it as being 'less than substantial' using the NPPF terminology.