Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Wiltshire Council Conservation (Central)

Officer's Name: Steven Vellance
Officer's Title: Planning Officer

Application No: **PL/2023/06954 and PL/2023/06788**
Essential structural repairs to timber frame and associated areas, including replacement rear gable end frame. Replacement of out of keeping conservatory with kitchen extension, single storey at rear. Improvement to en-suite bathroom layout, door relocation.
EAST BARTON, 55 MARTINS ROAD, KEEVIL, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 6NA

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

Recommendations:

	No Comment
	Support
X	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.

Section 72(1) 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.

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.

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 site is a Grade II listed building located within Keevil Conservation Area

Proposal: Essential structural repairs to the timber frame and updates to the layout and flow of the property, restoring previous door openings and room layouts.

Relevant planning history: ENQ/2023/00639 - Essential structural repairs to timber frame and associated areas, replacement of out of keeping conservatory kitchen extension and improvements to stairs

Issues: Impact on the significance of the listed building; impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

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, Access 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.

The purpose of the proposed work is twofold:
1. To undertake essential structural repairs to the timber frame, and then enable the historic fabric to breathe again and dry out, managing moisture correctly with traditional materials. This is to restore the structural integrity of the timber frame and cease any further decay impacting the asset, while also enabling a warmer, more energy efficient and healthier living environment.
2. To make some sensitive updates to the layout and flow of the property, restoring previous door openings and room layouts. This will provide safer and more logical routes around the building, as well as sensitively improving its liveability in the modern age.

Each element of the proposed works is discussed in turn below:

i) Removal of external modern impermeable black and white paint - This building has suffered due to the introduction of modern impermeable surface coatings, namely black paint onto timber, white plastic emulsion onto bricks and cement render filling gaps in frame joints and the interface of brick and timber along with some cement render panels. It is proposed to carefully remove these modern damaging materials, to stop this accelerated decay from doing any further damage to the structural integrity of the building. As agreed during my site visit at pre-application stage, the applicant has carried out limited trial areas for each of the proposed surface removals. I can confirm that I am happy with the trials as carried out and do not consider that they will be damaging to the historic fabric provided that works are carried out to the same specification and contractor(s).

ii) Essential Structural Repairs to Timber Frame – The timber frame in parts requires serious and substantial repairs, specifically to the rear gable end which has been significantly altered with key structural members being replaced with inferior timber simply faced and bolted, rather than jointed into the frame. Internally the spine beam which would have once landed on this wall, is no longer attached and a later parallel beam is also not adequately supported meaning the first floor is inadequately supported and has dropped significantly. The main areas of concern are:-
   a) The western gable is leaning so that it has become detached from the remainder and requires almost complete reconstruction.
   b) The most western bay i.e. 4-5 is bowing on its northern side and will require extensive repair and replacement.
   c) The rafters both original and replaced are not fixed to the purlins and are pushing out the external walls at eaves level.
   d) The front eastern bays are leaning to the north and are not properly fixed to the later added floors.
   e) Many external joints either do not exist or have opened up

   There is no objection in principle to the repair/rebuild as shown in the drawings of this application. However a full schedule of timber frame repairs will be needed, although it is agreed that this can not take place until the building is cleared of all recent rubbish construction to fully expose the historic fabric so that a proper evaluation can be made. As such I am willing to condition this aspect of the proposal.

iii) Removal of black paint from some inside timbers - Some internal timber have been painted black with modern impermeable paint. It is proposed to remove this latest layer of incomplete, patchy colour to enable correct moisture management to return and allow the original stain to be shown in its entirety. As agreed during my site visit at pre-application stage, the applicant has carried out limited trial areas for each of the proposed surface removals. I can confirm that I am happy with the trials as carried out and do not consider that they will be damaging to the historic fabric provided that works are carried out to the same specification and contractor(s).

iv) Replace and repaint window frames in a different colour - All windows require overdue maintenance to ensure they continue to be serviceable and avoid repair/replacement. Externally, it would improve the aesthetic if the frames are no longer a harsh bright white against softer tones of natural oak, lime mortar and soft red brick. The colour is to be agreed with the LPA. Regarding the proposed windows to be replaced, it can be seen that these are beyond economic repair and would be replaced on a like-for-like basis. As such these joinery works are considered acceptable.

v) Repaint existing front door - It is proposed to repaint the existing front door from the current pale blue colour. This is acceptable in principle subject to the colour being agreed with the LPA.

vi) Replacement of out of keeping conservatory with kitchen extension – The existing conservatory is a ramshackle lean to structure which has been built against the building since 1981, with no obvious permissions. It is not watertight, and is channelling rainwater against the damaged gable end of the house causing ingress during heavy rainfall through the poor timber repairs. It is proposed to remove this addition to the building, for access to the gable for essential timber frame repairs and for subsequent replacement with a structure more in keeping with the building. It is proposed to re-build a timber framed extension on a very similar footprint to existing, linking the main house with the brewhouse as it is currently but with a more in keeping structure and improved use of space. To improve the usability of the kitchen as the heart of the home, it is proposed to remove part of the brick wall to link the new extension with the current kitchen. It is also proposed to incorporate a wet underfloor heating throughout the combined space. On the extension, it is intended to utilise a duo pitch tiled roof, subservient to the main buildings. The structure would have opening doors along a large part of its length, to enable the external space to be used for dining and linked into the house and to improve the internal natural light into the older part of the house. This is considered acceptable.

vii) Repairs to brewhouse - The historic outbuilding has been much neglected, utilised mainly for storage and a crude attempt at a utility room in the past, meaning the introduction of modern materials internally and poor attempts at repairs externally to brickwork. It is proposed to properly link this space with the main house, to utilise as an occasional garden room. This would require repairs to the brickwork and ensure the roof structure is sound. The condition of the chimney stack also needs addressing, the lean is significant and may need some partial rebuilding for safety. The bread oven roof has also failed in places, so this would also need repair and reinstatement of its roof structure. This is considered acceptable.

viii) Reinstatement of planform - The current dining room, is a thoroughfare currently with diagonally opposed doorways from boot room to kitchen, and a boiler cupboard. It is proposed to reinstate this space as a more usable room, by closing the current doorway to the kitchen and reopening a historic doorway into the extension for kitchen access. It is also proposed to link this room with the main living room directly, instead of walking through the porch to access the living room. This would be achieved by reopening a historic doorway between the two into the original lobby of the house, and the reinstatement of the lobby partition wall and door into the living room. It is also proposed to remove the old boiler, and replace with a new boiler located in a more functional location in either the bootroom or porch to enable the current cupboard to be removed. This would also need timber frame repairs to this corner post. The works as proposed are acceptable.

ix) Improvement to en-suite bathroom layout - The current ensuite is a modern stud wall encapsulation of space, part of which is in the master footprint, the other in the landing space. Its current fixtures are needing replacement. It is proposed to move the doorway, to enable a larger shower footprint to be created. It is also proposed to move the bedroom doorway towards the landing, to enclose the ensuite in the bedroom. The works as proposed are acceptable.

x) Fireplace restoration and woodburner installation including removal of modern brick wall and hearth in living room fireplace - The existing fireplace has been heavily modified in recent times, yet the original rear wall sits just behind the out of keeping brickettes and it is hoped that the original hearth may be under the modern raised brick and tile hearth, along with a seat in the right hand alcove. It is proposed to remove this single skin rear wall, the modern hearth and restore the original features guided by what is found. The works to the chimney are considered essential repair. The works as proposed are acceptable.

xi) Addition of woodburners in living room and dining room, with associated flue liners and chimney pots/capping, flashing and repairs - The living room open fire is highly inefficient from

a heating perspective and the integrity of the flue pargetting cannot be verified completely from a safety perspective so this is currently redundant. The dining room woodburner is beyond repair, and the partial flue liner is not fully intact to roof level, with visible openings at joins up the chimney. The chimney does not have any current rain protection with all 3 flues are open to the elements, and with no fires burning, all three flues are absorbing moisture into the central chimney stack. It is proposed to install appropriately sized woodburners in both fireplaces, with insulated flue liners and to add a flat raised slab across the top of the chimney, to prevent rainwater ingress, especially to the third unused bedroom flue, with mesh surrounds to prevent birds entering. It is also proposed to repair the current lead flashing and any pointing required to brickwork. The works as proposed are acceptable.

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 largely positive 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 applications.

Please can the planning officer condition as follows:

- Samples of all new materials to be submitted for approval
- A full schedule of timber frame repairs and associated drawings will be needed prior to the commencement of development
- Mortar mix for repointing and sample panel
- Details of underfloor heating and floor finishes
- Colour of all external joinery
- Metal rainwater goods
- Extractor, flues and vents