Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Officer's Name: Nick Clark
Officer's Title: Planning Officer

Application No: **PL/2023/06332**
Removal of 2 windows in the front elevation and rear conservatory. Two storey rear and side extension with addition of 3 dormer roof windows on the south-facing roof slope.
The Well House, 14-15 Union Street, Ramsbury, SN8 2PR

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

Recommendations:

	No Comment
	Support
	Support subject to conditions (please set out below)
X	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) 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.

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 lies within the Ramsbury Conservation Area and is identified in the Ramsbury Conservation Area Character Appraisal as Significant Unlisted Building. The building is a Non Designated Heritage Asset and makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The property also affects the site of the neighbouring Vine Cottage which is also a Grade II listed building.

The building is a detached, 4 bedroom, two storey building set in row of detached houses. It includes a generous rear garden that backs onto the Telephone Exchange.

Proposal: The proposal seeks to extend to the rear and side of the property plus the addition of 3 dormer roof windows on the south-facing roof slope.

Relevant planning history: PL/2023/00247 - Removal of 2 windows in the front elevation and rear conservatory. Two storey rear and side extension with addition of 3 dormer roof windows on the south-facing roof slope. – (Refused)

Issues: Impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area, impact on the setting of neighbouring 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 "Heritage Impact Assessment 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 key changes proposed consist of:

- Internal alterations to reorganise the ground floor living space to be better suited as a modern family home.
- Create two storey pitched roof extension, to the rear and side of the existing building
- Form new matching dormers to the side and front elevations.

The building has historically always had a linear form with the gable end facing Union Street. Historically the building was longer with its linear form stepping inwards along the plot, this may have been a series of much smaller cottages or outbuildings. As such in principle there is no objection to a rear extension subject to this being of a high quality design.

There are however heritage objections to a two storey side extension, since this would not relate to the historic linear form of the host building. This would create an L shaped building form. This would appear heavy in the streetscene with an unduly deep roof. This in my view would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area and the host building.

The front elevation of the host building would also be dominated by the proposed three roof dormers and these would have a awkward relationship with the first floor windows of the cottage. The existing roof is simple and uncluttered and dormer would be out of keeping and would produce a top heavy effect to this humble cottage. This in my view would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of this NDHA and the conservation area. In addition, this would also have a detrimental impact on the setting of the neighbouring listed building, Vine Cottage due to the dominating effect of the three dormers which would loom above the very low eaves of this thatched cottage.

Para 199 of the NPPF confirms that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and Para 200 requires that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration .... or development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification. The application does not provide compelling evidence that the extensions are necessary to facilitate the ongoing viability of the building as a residential unit.

The development proposed is considered to cause less than substantial harm to the designated heritage assets. In such circumstances, Para 202 of the NPPF states that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. The proposal does not outweigh the harm caused to the designated heritage assets and as such is not sufficiently justified and is therefore contrary to policy CP57 and CP58 of the WCS and the requirements of the NPPF.

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 the NPPF states, heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and it is important to conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. From a heritage perspective, the proposal fails to comply with s.16, 66 and 72 of the P(LB&CA)A 1990, policy CP57 and CP58 of the WCS and heritage advice in the NPPF.