Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

29 September 2023

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

Officer's Name: Victoria Davis
Officer's Title: Planning Officer

Application No: **PL/2023/05076**
Storage building ancillary to the site.
The Kennels, Spye Park, Lacock, Chippenham, Wilts, SN15 2PS

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: 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 site is located within the Grade II Listed Spye Park Registered Park and Gardens. No other heritage assets are affected.

Proposal: The proposal seeks a storage building that will be ancillary to the site (building already constructed)

Relevant planning history: PL/2022/06476 (withdrawn) and Certificate of Lawfulness Application, red: PL/2022/09451 (withdrawn).

Issues: Impact on significance of the Registered Historic Park & Garden

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, whilst the application is accompanied by a "Design & Access Statement" the document provides limited information about the building and fails to provide any objective assessment of the impact of the proposal and, as a result, it fails to meet the requirements of the NPPF.

The Design & Access Statement, submitted 26 June 2023 does state that 'A Heritage Impact Statement will follow the submission of this Application'. To date this has not been received.

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 development proposal site is located within the grade II registered park and garden of Spye Park. The key feature of the gardens are the remains of the early 18th century garden by Stephen Switzer one of the predominant designers of the day. It is surrounded by late 18th century park which reflects more of the landscape movement and there is later 19th century planting reflecting the results of plant hunting and fashion for exotic specimen trees.

The proposal site is near the southern boundary close to a subsidiary drive and the walled garden. Historically this area was open but surrounding to the north and east by scutts copse. The area of the new building is tucked into the land and screened from the main park by the copse. The building is not readily visible from the drive.

In heritage terms this proposal causes no harm to the overall significance of the registered park.

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 proposal on heritage asset 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.