Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Application No: **PL/2023/07988 & PL/2023/8158**
To increase the height of one of the chimneys from 1.25m to 1.83m to comply with current building reguslations, two courses of brick and a taller pot to be added
1 – 2 Churchyard Cottages, Church Walk, Avebury, Marlborough, SN8 1RG

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

Recommendations:

X	Comment (for reasons set out below)
	Support
	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) 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.

Site: The site forms part of a semi-detached pair of Grade II listed cottages located with Avebury Conservation Area

Proposal: The proposal seeks the increase in height of one chimney

Relevant planning history: K/43667/L – Replacement roof timbers & structures, stripping of thatch layers, removal of external masonry paint, reconstruction of chimneys, opening up of fireplace - approved

Issues: Impact on the significance of the listed building; impact on the setting of listed buildings; 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 and Access 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.

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.

1&2 Churchyard Cottages were probably built in the 18th century (pre-1724), constructed with a timber frame and random stone rubble, with wattle and daub walls and a thatched roof. During the 19th century brick and random stone rubble extensions were added to both ends and at the back. In the 1970's the cottages were renovated and became one property. The cottage is Grade II listed.

The cottage has 2 chimneys, both with brick stacks and one with a short clay or terracotta chimney pot. The left-hand side one, on the front aspect, is disused. The right-hand side one, on the front aspect is used for smoke extraction from a wood burning stove located in the living room.

Current Building Regulations state that the top of the chimney pot should achieve 1.83m above the thatch ridge. This is to ensure that should hot embers exit the top of the chimney, it is likely that they will be carried away from the thatch with the up draught, therefore reducing the risk of sparks falling onto the thatch and decreasing the risk of a fire occurring. Additionally, insurance companies are increasingly requesting that the height of the chimney pot should meet the current Building Regulations of 1.83m.

The current chimney consists of a brick and lime mortar chimney stack, topped with a terracotta or clay chimney pot and a stainless-steel cowl. The proposal is to raise the height of the chimney stack, from the current height of approx. 0.75m, by 2 courses of reclaimed bricks, in keeping with

the character of the property. The current terracotta or clay chimney pot to be replaced with a taller 0.9m terracotta or clay chimney pot. The existing stainless-steel cowl would be reinstated.

Whilst in heritage terms there is no objection in principle to the increase in height, the proposed taller pot would be visually jarring and as such it would be preferred to have a smaller height of pot and increase the height of the chimney by one additional course of brickwork, in order to give better proportion to the stack.

The new bricks and mortar would need to match the existing. Should the applicant wish to avoid a planning condition for covering this element of the work, these details would need to be provided with the current applications.

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 such, amendments and further details are required.