Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Application No: **PL/2023/09344 & PL/2023/ 08970**
Removal of modern porch structure, new door joinery, removal of asbestos roofing on curtilage listed structures
Wharf Cottage, 553 Canal Bridge, Semington, Trowbridge, BA14 6JT

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

Recommendations:

X	Comment (for reasons set out below)
	Support in principle subject to amendments to the scheme (as set out below)
	Support subject to conditions (as 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 or enhancing listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

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.

Site and assets considered: Wharf Cottage is a small stone built cottage situated along the canal side in Semington. The property is a Grade II listed building.

Proposal: The proposal seeks the removal of a modern porch structure, new door joinery, removal of asbestos roofing on curtilage listed structures and the erection of a garden fence.

Relevant planning history: N/A

Issues: impact on the significance of the listed building.

Information considered/provided: 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.

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.

Significance of assets and contribution of setting: The NPPF defines significance as the "value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be **archaeological**, **architectural**, **artistic** or **historic**. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting." Historic England assesses significance in a similar manner, referring to evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values of a place.

In this case the significance of the building lies largely with its historic fabric and architecture - its form, layout and architectural expression/detailing and use of high-quality design materials which have significant aesthetic and architectural interest. The rear of the building has, however, been compromised by an extension during the modern period and is of lesser interest. The setting of the building is also important due to it being closely associated with the canal and the industrial origins/heritage.

Assessment: The cottage sits adjacent to the canal on the west side of the site. The original house was built as a simple two up, two down dwelling with central chimney; entrance and stairs, and almost certainly, with a stone built single storey leanto at the rear. This has since been extended with a two storey flat roof extension with cement render. A composite block and stone lean-to porch has been added to the front of the cottage, and the original front door removed. Various garage and outbuildings are sited in an ad hoc fashion along the west side of the site. These were built later than 1948 and as such do not fall within the listing. It is the applicants intentions to clear these in their entirely. A single largely modern stone and block built outbuilding to the south of the house sits up against what appears to be the original stone wall of the original outhouses, and the site boundary. This in turn, is physically connected to the house by a polycarbonate and timber roofed covered area.

Each element of the proposal is discussed in turn below:

- Removal of modern porch structure - The proposal is to remove the modern porch on the front of the cottage. This has been installed without consent and has built over the original stone hood and brackets, which will be repaired as part of this proposal. In heritage terms there is no objection to these works subject to sensitive making good of original walling, stone hood and brackets following the removal of the existing structure.
- New Door Joinery - None of the existing doors are original. Both front doors and the back doors are UPVC and not in keeping with the listed building. The north side door into the kitchen is a panelled, ledged and braced but is not original, is lightweight and ill fitting. In heritage terms the loss of the existing doors in acceptable subject to a sympathetic new design and materials. The design of all of the proposed doors is not considered in keeping with the character of the listed building. The original front door was most likely a 4 panelled timber door without glazing. It would be my preference that the proposed door be amended to reflect this design; if glazing is required, the two top panels could potentially be glazed. Regarding the proposed doors in the north and south elevation, both of these doors appear suburban and not in keeping with the listed building. Simple ledge and braced doors would be more in keeping with the vernacular character of the building.
- Removal of asbestos roofing – There is no in principle heritage objection to the removal of the asbestos roofing. However GRP (glass reinforced plastic) is not considered a sympathetic replacement due to its modern appearance. Either a traditional metal profiled roof is suggested or alternatively a natural slate, subject to roof pitch (17.5 degrees is the minimum roof pitch).
- Erection of a garden fence - Historic Mapping clearly indicates that there was a protected and defined garden or yard area in front of the cottage, which is likely to have been defined by timber fencing very similar to that seen in the old images of the nearby Lock Keepers Cottage. It is unlikely that the canal side wharf itself was fenced as it was part of the working yard and depot. There is no heritage objection to the proposed picket fence around the defined garden area, However a less fussy boundary treatment is sought for the canal frontage, e.g. dark painted estate metal park rail fencing.

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. Further amendments are therefore required.