Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Jocelyn Sage
Senior Conservation Officer
Wiltshire Council Conservation (South and West - part)

Officer's Name: Lynda King
Officer's Title: Senior Planning Officer

Application No: **PL/2023/08724 (FUL) and PL/2023/8892 (LBC)**
Conversion and extension of outbuilding to create two bedroom holiday let.
BRIDGE HOUSE, SALISBURY ROAD, COOMBE BISSETT, SALISBURY, SP5 4LE

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

Recommendations:

	No comment
	Support in principle subject to amendments to the scheme (as set out below)
	Support subject to conditions (as 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.

National Planning Practice Guidance provides guidance on interpreting the NPPF.

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.

Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy Policy CP57 'Ensuring high quality design and place shaping': A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality.

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 (amongst other things) "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" and "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."

Historic England Advice Note 2 – Making changes to Heritage Assets illustrates the application of policies set out in the NPPF in determining applications for PP and LBC.

Site and assets considered:

Bridge House is a grade II listed building. The list description reads as follows:

Detached house. Mid-C18, enlarged and remodelled early C19. Flemish bond brick, tiled roofs with brick stack to right. 2- storey, 5-window front. 6-panelled door, in C19 part, is in round-arched reeded case with paterae and fanlight, to right are two 16- pane sashes with Gothic glazing bars and cambered heads, left part is C18 and has two 12-pane sashes. First floor has one 15-pane and two 12-pane sashes with Gothic glazing bars to right and two 12- pane sashes with segmental heads to left. Dentilled eaves cornice to right and stepped eaves to left. The returns are rendered, right has one sash. Rear has C18 outshut to right with C20 dormer and sashes, to left is rear C19 range with casement and glazed door to ground floor and round-arched window with interlaced glazing bars to first floor. 2-span roof to C19 range. Interior has early C19 fittings including 6-panelled doors with reeded surrounds, reeded ceiling frieze and newel stairs. (Unpublished records of RCHM (England), Salisbury).

Structures or buildings within the curtilage of a listed building, that pre-date July 1948 may be deemed to be covered by the listing ie 'curtilage listed'. As such, **the structure is curtilage listed** and therefore a listed building application is also be required, as was applied for in respect of the previous application for the conversion of this building (PL/2022/05699 and PL/2022/06698).

The house and site are within the Coombe Bissett Conservation Area.

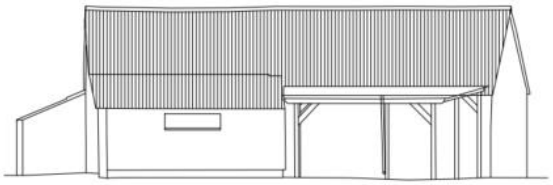
Proposal:

There is an existing L-shaped structure to the rear of Bridge House. The proposal is to convert this to letting accommodation. (There were previous applications for the conversion of the building with limited external alterations which was approved).

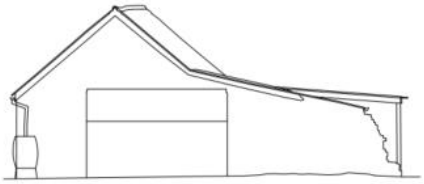
Can we check that the labelling on the proposed elevations is correct?



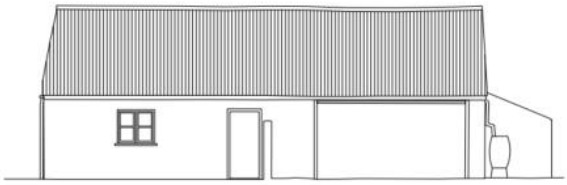
Ridge raised, corrugated roof replaced with slate, new brickwork and flint panelling



Rear Elevation @ 1:100



Ridge is raised. Shallow pitch roof removed and an extension at right-angles added. Conservatory removed and tall pitched porch added



Front Elevation @ 1:100

Now the 'rear' (is it west) elevation? Infilled 'garage door' opening with horizontal boarding. Considerably higher ridge. 3 rooflights

Issues: impact on the setting of Bridge House – a designated listed building and the Coombe Bissett conservation area.

Information considered/provided: Paragraph 194 requires that applicants describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. This includes conservation areas which are heritage assets. In this particular case, the application is supported by a heritage statement provided by the agent (RAW) as well as the architect who says that the proposals have been developed '*to be in keeping with and respectful of surrounding properties and not cause harm to the listed Bridge House'*.

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.

Assessment:

The current building is a modest single-storey building of agricultural character in pleasing locally-distinctive materials (brick and flint). It has minimal historic openings and rear flimsy addition at right-angles, with a shallow-pitched corrugated roof. In respect of the previous listed building application, I previously opined that '*in its current altered form, it is of limited interest'*. In particular, the rear extension, pergola and lean-to conservatory detract from the interest of the building.



The proposals are comprehensive, largely demolishing the rear 'flimsy' extension and constructing a two-storey right-angled extension; raising the ridge of the principal element to two-storey; infilling the rear corner; demolishing the modest conservatory on the side and replacing it with a more substantial 1 ½ storey entrance porch. Numerous rooflights are also added as well as various windows. The rear historic wall is demolished in part too (encircled on the above photo)

I have significant reservations about the proposals. The existing building is modest and linear in character and sited close to the house. The proposals, if implemented would change the character of the curtilage listed building. The footprint would be doubled, the building no longer being linear in character. It would read very much as a detached bungalow/house rather than an ancillary building, given the proposed treatment of the elevations and the notable increase in the scale and massing. In addition, it would entail the loss of some attractive historic fabric.

The building, as conceived, would have a much greater presence and I consider this would have an over-bearing and adverse impact on the setting of Bridge House. The accommodation aspirations seem ambitious given the current footprint of the building.

In terms of the impact on the conservation area, impacts are not considered only in terms of street scene views. That said, the existing building is visible from the road and, in view of the proposal to raise the ridge height of the existing building, one assumes it would be more visible from the road. Currently one can glimpse the countryside setting of Coombe Bisset beyond the building, which contributes to an appreciation of CB as a rural village. The increased volume and scale of the building, and the raising of the ridge, would block longer views to the open countryside beyond (the landscape setting and glimpsed views being a feature of the Coombe Bisset CA).

Summary & conclusion:

Section 66 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 requires that *'development which affects a listed building or **its setting**, the local planning authority ……..shall have **special regard** to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses*.'

Section 72 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 requires that works enhance or preserve the character of the conservation area.

Paragraph 206 requires that LPAs should *'look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas…..**and within the setting of heritage assets**, to enhance or better reveal their significance'.*

The building is functionally redundant and as such, a new use is required to ensure its continued survival, however, a variety of uses could be accommodated in the building and we have already approved a less damaging conversion scheme. The current proposals entail the extensive remodelling of the existing building, changing its character from a modest linear ancillary outbuilding to a much more imposing structure. It would also entail the loss of historic fabric which contributes to its significance.

The current proposals as conceived would erode the character of the existing building and have an adverse impact on the setting of Bridge House. As such, I consider the proposals are contrary to sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 as well as core policy 58. In terms of the level of harm, I would assess it as being 'less than substantial' using the NPPF terminology.