HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

In respect of:

NEW ENTRANCE LOBBY, RESTAURANT EXTENSION, NEW SHOPFRONT AND ENTRANCE TO SPA AND INSTALLATION OF PV PANELS ON MODERN BLOCK

At:

MILFORD HALL HOTEL, 206 CASTLE STREET, SALISBURY,

SP1 3TE

On behalf of:

Milford Hall Hotel

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This statement accompanies applications for various alterations at the Milford Hall Hotel, a Grade II* listed building.

1.2 The main objectives of the proposals are to improve accessibility to the hotel and spa, improve the appearance of the site and provide a sustainable form of energy.

1.3 The report describes the impact of the proposals on the heritage asset and its setting to fulfil the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, revised September 2023), and to meet the council's local validation checklist for applications affecting heritage assets.

1.4 A Heritage Assessment was produced for the site (Elaine Milton Heritage & Planning, July 2023), and this was used to inform the application proposals. This impact assessment should be read in conjunction with that report (included as part of the application submission).

5.1 The Heritage Assessment concluded that Milford Hall Hotel is a Grade II* listed building of considerable interest as a handsome and well-preserved late 18th/early 19th century gentleman's suburban residence, now hotel. The surrounding area was built up with terraced housing in the late 19th and early 20th centuries substantially altering the building's original semi-rural context. The hotel has been significantly added to at the rear in various stages resulting in a substantial building that extends the length of the plot.

1.5 A pre-application enquiry was recently made for the proposals (reference ENQ/2023/00950) and the response was generally supportive. The conservation officer commented as follows:

'Milford Hall Hotel is a II listed building requiring special regard to be paid to the desirability of its character and setting. The proposals all relate to modern additions to the rear, which are already extensive. Bearing the existing situation in mind, the additions to the lobby and dining room are modest and would not have a substantial impact…*

Works to improve the frontage of the spa building are welcomed, although it seems incredible that users of the spa would want to leave the hotel's private grounds to enter from the main road. The existing signage on this building is unauthorised and should be removed, and consent gained for any new signage. None should be illuminated.'

2.0 Proposals

2.1 The application relates to four separate proposals for the hotel complex as set out below.

New Entrance Lobby

2.2 The existing entrance lobby to the rear of the main house is a modern glazed structure of poor design. The proposal is to extend the entrance lobby southwards by approximately 2.6m, creating additional lobby space and giving it a new and improved frontage treatment. The new lobby would be of a similar architectural language to the orangery style extension to the left of it, having full-height glazing, a moulded cornice and a parapet. The front would be adorned with a parapeted pediment. Behind the parapet would be a flat roof and central pitched roof section beyond the pediment. The walls of the new lobby would be rendered and painted white.



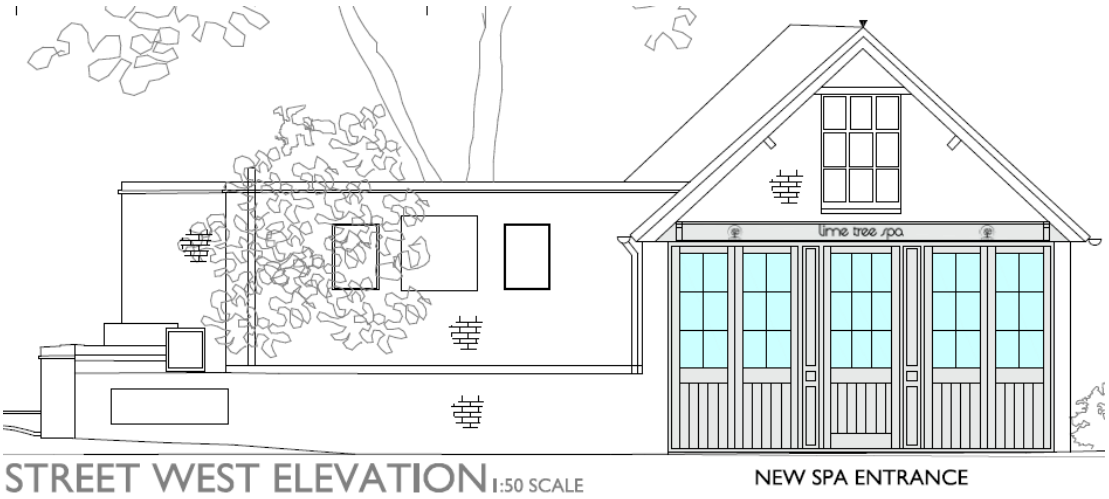
Proposed plan and elevation showing new entrance lobby and restaurant extension

Restaurant Extension

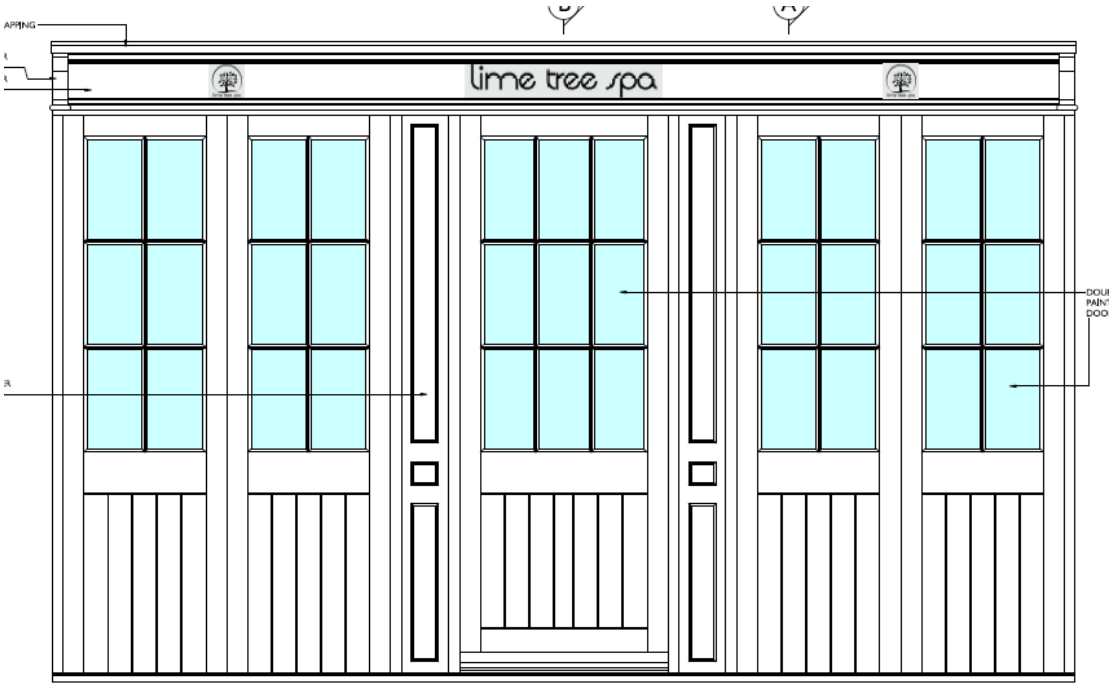
2.3 The restaurant to the east of the entrance lobby comprises a modern single-storey brick block with a hipped slate roof. An unsympathetic prefabricated PVC lean-to extends southwards to cover the terrace in front. The proposal is to replace the prefabricated element with a more robust structure of similar dimensions, i.e., approximately 9.8m long and 4.3m deep, but of improved design (see images above). Like the proposed entrance lobby, the restaurant extension would utilise a similar architectural language to the existing orangery style extension. It would have three sets of French doors with multi-pane glazing on the front (south elevation) and one set of French doors on the west side. The walls would be rendered and painted white. Behind the parapet would be a flat roof incorporating three pyramidal lantern lights.

New Spa Shopfront Entrance

2.4 The proposal is to provide a shopfront entrance within the front gable of the spa building to the south of the main house, to encourage external users and improve customer footfall. The existing timber infill panel within the gable would be replaced with a series of five half-glazed doors with vertical timber panelling in the lower halves and multi-pane glazing within the upper halves. The central entrance door would be framed to either side by posts having timber panels on the exterior. The shopfront would incorporate a narrow, painted timber fascia with corbelling at either end advertising the spa.



Elevation onto Castle Street



Proposed spa shopfront

Solar Photovoltaic Panels

2.5 An array of solar panels is proposed on the slate roof of the modern two-storey central bedroom block at the rear of the hotel. The array would cover most of the western roof slope and would consist of a group of dark solar panels clipped onto the surface of the slates.



Aerial view of the hotel site showing mock-up of solar panels

3.0 Policy Framework

Primary Legislation

3.1 Statutory duties exist under sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act') for the local planning authority in considering whether to grant listed building consent or planning permission for development that affects a listed building or its setting to 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.

Development Plan

3.2 The statutory duties are reflected in the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS), which was adopted by Wiltshire Council on 20 January 2015. Core Policy 57 of the WCS seeks to ensure high quality design and place shaping. Core Policy 58 of the WCS seeks to promote the conservation and, where possible, enhancement of the county's historic environment.

National Planning Policy

3.3 National planning policy relating to the historic environment is provided within section 16 of the NPPF (revised September 2023). It advises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

3.4 Paragraph 201 of the NPPF advises where proposals would lead to substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the proposals should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of four listed criteria therein apply.

3.5 Paragraph 202 advises that where proposals would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals, including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

3.6 Paragraph 206 of the NPPF advises that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas or the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance.

National Guidance

3.7 It is advisable that proposals for repair, restoration and alteration should follow the guidance within the *Historic England Advice Note 2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets* (HEAN2, February 2016). The document acknowledges (paragraph 3) that the best way to conserve a building is to keep it in use, and that a *'reasonable and proportionate approach to owner's needs is therefore essential'*.

3.8 As a general principle for adaptation, HEAN2 advises as much of the historic fabric and plan form that contributes to the significance of a heritage asset should be retained as possible, with new work ideally being reversible. Harm to significance may be justified on grounds of overriding public benefit that may accrue including maintaining the building in its optimum viable use.

3.9 HEAN2 advises that issues to consider in respect of new additions to heritage assets are proportion, height, massing, bulk, materials and setting, and that new work should not dominate the existing in terms of scale, material or siting. The guidance advises that an assessment of the asset's significance will usually suggest an appropriate form of any extension.

4.0 Heritage Impact Assessment

New Entrance Lobby

4.1 The proposals have responded to the guidelines emerging from the assessment of significance with the existing poor-quality rear entrance being improved by its re-fronting with a structure that echoes the adjacent orangery extension. The redevelopment would have a coherent design approach and materials. The increase in footprint would be modest and the entrance lobby would remain subservient to the house in its scale and design. The high levels of glazing would enable the structure to appear light-weight and distinguish it from the historic elements of the hotel. The use of a similar architectural language would unify the modern additions at the rear of the house.

Restaurant Extension

4.2 The proposals have responded to the guidelines emerging from the assessment of significance with the existing poor-quality prefabricated canopy structure being replaced with a more robust structure that echoes the adjacent orangery extension and assimilates with the new entrance lobby. The redevelopment would have a coherent design approach and materials. The footprint would remain the same enabling the restaurant extension to maintain its subservience to the house. The high levels of glazing would enable the structure to appear light-weight and distinguish it from the historic elements of the hotel. The use of a similar architectural language would unify the modern additions at the rear of the house.

New Spa Shopfront Entrance

4.3 The proposed shopfront entrance would encourage external users and customer footfall, in turn helping to sustain the use of the former coach house building and ultimately its long-term conservation. The restoration of a wide opening in the west gable would improve an appreciation of the former coach house entrance. The full-height doors with vertical planks in the lower half would mimic the existing ledged and braced doors on the inside of the gable. The modest design of the shopfront would be in keeping with the ancillary nature of the building and would be subservient to the main house. The introduction of doors and glazing within them would create a more active street frontage on Castle Street, promote the use of the building and improve levels of natural light to the building's users - all helping to sustain the building in active use. The traditional timber shopfront and hand-painted

fascia would be appropriate to the historic building, the setting of the high status listed building and the street scene.

Solar Photovoltaic Panels

4.4 The proposed solar panels would provide the hotel with a sustainable energy source, helping to reduce carbon emissions. The solar panels would be located on the roof of one of the modern bedroom blocks, set well back from the main house (by some 27 m), in a position of low prominence on the site and within the context of numerous modern additions. The dark panels would blend in with the existing slate roof. The method of fixing would allow the slates to be retained and the installation to be reversible.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Milford Hall Hotel is a Grade II* listed building of considerable interest as a handsome and well-preserved late 18th/early 19th century gentleman's suburban residence. The building became used as a hotel in the 20th century and was significantly added to at the rear.

5.2 The hotel owners are seeking to improve accessibility to the hotel and spa, improve the appearance of the site and provide a sustainable form of energy. The proposals include a new entrance lobby and restaurant extension within the modern additions at the rear of the hotel, the provision of solar panels on the roof of a modern bedroom block and the formation of a new shopfront entrance to the spa building.

5.3 The proposals have been influenced by the recent assessment of significance exercise and responses from a pre-application enquiry, which were generally supportive.

5.4 The proposed alterations would be of appropriate design, scale, materials, proportion and siting, thereby following the guidelines for making changes to heritage assets within the Historic England document HEAN2.

5.5 There would be no direct impact on the Grade II* listed building although the proposals would affect its setting. The impact on the significance of the listed building would be low and deemed 'less than substantial' under the terms of the NPPF. At the same time, there would be public benefits from the visual improvements to the site, improved usability of the hotel and the use of a sustainable energy source.

5.6 Overall, the benefits from the proposals would outweigh the less than substantial harm.