CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/08817
Application Type:	Listed building consent (Alt/Ext)
Site Inspection:	
Consultation ends:	08 December 2023
Case officer:	Fiona Webb

Site Address:	2 BRIDEWELL STREET, DEVIZES, SN10 1NQ
Proposal:	Proposed installation of a bathroom
Recommendation:	Approve with Conditions

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.

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."

Site and assets considered: The property is a Grade II listed building located within Devizes Conservation Area. It also affects the setting of numerous other listed building in the immediate vicinity.

Proposal: The proposal seeks the installation of a bathroom at first floor

Relevant planning history: ENQ/2023/01088 – Installation of new bathroom in existing bedroom;

Issues: impact on the significance of the listed building, impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings, impact on the character and appearance of the 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 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 application is accompanied by a “Design and Access Statement” which provides sufficient information to understand the impact of the proposals and is proportionate to the 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 (as appropriate): 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. The rear of the building has however, been compromised by extension and alteration during the modern period and is of lesser interest.

Assessment: The proposed works are to change a large, unusable hallway on the first floor rear area of the property into a bathroom. The area noted as “Bedroom 2” on the plan is unusable as the bedroom as it is the only access to the staircase to the bathroom and bedroom, which is currently on the second floor.

Neighbouring properties have a very similar layout to the one as proposed, with a bathroom utilising this space on the first floor.

No changes to the front of the property are neither proposed, nor any significant changes internally.

The bathroom has been sympathetically designed to fit into the space of the currently unutilised room, ensuring the cupboard to the rear of the property and cupboard under the second floor stairs can remain as is. Plumbing is already available to this room and is boxed in to the rear right hand corner. This will be accessed for the plumbing to this bathroom and all pipework and waste will feed into the existing. Extensions of the current plumbing and waste, where required to the sink and bath, will be boxed in so as not to effect the building fabric. An extractor will not be installed as there is a window, so as to not require any disturbance to the external fabric of the building. The vent for the new toilet will be positioned through the modern felt roof of the utility/leanto. The proposed new partitions will be vertical timber clad so to be in keeping with the property and the rear partition will be glazed at the top with a small window to allow in natural light. The current door will be re-used to form the bathroom door.

As such in conservation terms the works are considered acceptable since there will be no loss of historic fabric and the works are fully reversible if so required at a later date.

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 proposals on heritage assets 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.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES:
Devizes Town Council – No objection

REPRESENTATIONS:
Trust for Devizes – No objection

RECOMMENDATION:
Consent

REASON FOR GRANTING PERMISSION/CONSENT/REFUSAL:
The proposed works would preserve the special historic interest of the heritage assets in accordance with Sections 16(2) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990 and NPPF section 16, because these works would have no detrimental impact on the historic fabric and would be of an appropriate layout, material and detailing.

Conditions: (2)

1 The works for which Listed Building Consent is hereby granted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2 The works hereby granted consent shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents: Location Plan – dated 12/10/2023 Existing First Floor Plan – dated 12/10/2023 Proposed First Floor Plan – dated 12/10/2023 Existing Elevations – dated 12/10/2023 Additional Information Submitted – dated 9/11/2023 REASON: For the avoidance

of doubt and in the interests of the significance of the heritage assets and their setting.