CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/09368
Application Type:	Listed building consent (Alt/Ext)
Site Inspection:	
Consultation ends:	01 December 2023
Case officer:	Fiona Webb

Site Address:	THE OLD MILL, EDWARD STREET, WESTBURY
Proposal:	Repair and refurbishment of rotten window on south elevation of building to include replacement of single glazing with Slimlite double glazed units and beading and cill alterations to improve water dispersion/durability.
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." 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: The site is a Grade II listed building located within Westbury Conservation Area. The structure comprises the original grade II listed Angel Mill together with grade II listed lower screen walls to both Edward Street and Church Street;

Proposal: Repair and refurbishment of rotten window

Relevant planning history: ENQ/2023/00678 – Replacement of existing timber windows

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 "Heritage Statement" which provides sufficient information to understand the impact of the proposal 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: 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, and architectural expression which have significant aesthetic and architectural interest and which contribute to the character of the conservation area.

Assessment: The windows of The Angel Mill are replacement items installed in the 1990s and are painted softwood with single glazing. Despite regular repair and redecoration many of the windows are suffering decay as a result of poor detailing and are in need of repair and improvement. The main areas of decay relate to a lack detailing to throw' water away from the windows specifically at the cill and bottom of the frame. Both these omissions lead to water accumulating on the bottom rail of the opening lights and the stool/foot of the frame, causing rot.

The stone mullions and surrounds to the window are stone, but have been overpainted. The paint used was not to be breathable and mould has developed between the stone and paint, blistering it. This has also led to decay of the stone in some areas, which needs repair.

The proposed works, rather than replicating the original poor detailing which has led to the current issues with rot, seek to carry out repairs to retain the existing windows, but include details to help throw rainwater off the windows and therefore increase their durability/maintenance cycle. The window design would retain the existing window and its configuration of fixed lights over opening sashes, but add a drip bead at the bottom of the opening sash and a projecting cill to the stool of the frame itself. These details should throw water off the windows and reduce the likelihood of rot developing in the future, whilst maintaining the overall look and character of the existing window.

It is also proposed that the window glazing be amended to be Slimlite double glazed units, which will improve the thermal performance of the building, but retain the appearance of the existing windows. The paint to the stone surround to the window is to be removed to the stone to 'breathe' and eliminate the mould build-up caused by the existing non-breathable paint. This would also reinstate the original stone colour and character of the window surrounds.

These works are acceptable in conservation terms since they would not cause the loss of historic fabric, would not alter the fundamental visual appearance and character of the window, and would assist in improving performance and durability.

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:
Westbury Town Council – No objection

REPRESENTATIONS:
None

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 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 30/10/2023 Existing and Proposed Window Repair and Refurbishment Plan – dated 30/10/2023 Annotated Existing South Elevation – dated 30/10/2023 REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of the significance of the heritage assets and their setting