Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

18 November 2023

Fiona Webb
Senior Conservation Officer (Consultant)
Wiltshire Council Conservation (Central)

Officer's Name: Selina Parker-Miles
Officer's Title: Planning Officer

Application No: **PL/2023/10266 & PL/2023/09957**
Replacement roof for conservatory, new doors to replace garage doors, new roof lights and internal changes
Littleton Mill House, Littleton, Semington, BA14 6LQ

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.
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.

Site and assets considered: The site is a Grade II listed building and is in near proximity of Littleton Mill and Littleton Mill Farmhouse which are also Grade II listed buildings.

Proposal: The proposal seeks to replacement the existing roof for the conservatory, new doors to replace garage doors, new roof lights and internal changes

Relevant planning history: W/89/01586/LBC – Conservatory (approved); W/02/01725/LBC - Removal of garage doors, rebuilding of front of garage with new single door (approved); PL/2022/02656 - Proposed wooden hut to house and protect turbines (approved)

Issues: impact on the significance of the listed building, impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings.

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.

Assessment: The property is the original mill owners house and is a detached house dating from late C18. The building is constructed from coursed rubble stone, concrete tiled roof with gable end stone stacks and coped verges. It is two-storey with an attic. There are two single storey service ranges to the north east rear elevation with dual-pitched roofs, which may be original or added sometime prior to 1840. In 1989 Listed Building consent was granted for a conservatory infill between the two single storey service ranges to the north of the original house. To the right return

of the front elevation there is a double garage with room above that is set slightly forward of the building line of the main house, this appears largely C20 construction.

The proposed works involve alterations to the conservatory, new infill and bathroom, alterations to the kitchen and snug, alterations to the garage and utility.

The conservatory would be replaced with an insulated timber framed structure, with an insulated, tiled roof. This would create a thermally efficient habitable room. The roof would have rooflights to continue to admit natural light and ventilation into the space. Two lead valley gutters would be formed to either side where the new infill meets the existing single storey structures. The glazed gable would be replaced by a more tiled hip.

The modern suspended ceiling over the snug would be removed to reveal the original roof structure and a new rooflight would be added to increase natural light and reduce the need for artificial lighting. The door from the Snug to the garden would be part infilled with matching coursed rubble stone and a window inserted. The cill of the window between the snug and the conservatory would be lowered to form a doorway. The cill to the window between the kitchen and conservatory would be dropped to form another doorway. The existing opening between the conservatory and the kitchen would be infilled. The ground floor bathroom would be reconfigured to form a new smaller WC accessed off a lobby to the east. A new stud wall would separate the area from the snug to the north.

At first floor, a new bathroom would be introduced within the roof of the new infill. A door would be formed to provide access off the quarter landing.

The garage would also be coverted to residential use, with the alternate tread stair to the existing home office removed and replaced with a new shallower staircase, to make access to the home office safer. This would involve the removal of some of the floor of the home office to create a larger structural opening. Lightweight timber studwork and insulation would be added to the external walls to convert the garage into a habitable space. A pair of rooflights would be introduced to bring natural light and ventilation into the first floor, making the space usable as a home office.

Each of the proposals is discussed in turn below:

Conservatory infill and bathroom - The conservatory has reached the end of its useful life and is thermally inefficient. The relationship of the existing habitable rooms is also awkward and the conservatory is primarily used as circulation. At the first floor there is one family bathroom serving four bedrooms.

There is no objection to the removal of the existing conservatory as it is modern fabric and of no heritage significance. However the proposed infill is not subservient in its proportions, in particular the form of the roof is too bulky in comparison to the existing service wings and would have a hip end which is out of keeping with the character of the rear elevation of the building. There is also a heritage objection to the knocking through of the original rear wall of the main building to create an opening for the bathroom, due to loss of historic fabric and original plan form.

Garage and Utility – Looking at the ownership of the site it would appear that the land in front of the garage is not in the ownership of the property? If this is the case, the only parking available on site is the existing garage. Whilst this is not a heritage concern, however may be a planning concern since this would remove the only available parking for the property. Turning to the

conversion of the garage and the proposed works, there is no in principle objection to the removal of the existing garage door since it is modern fabric. However the proposed doors are suburban in their design and would detract from the character and appearance of the listed building. Particularly when the garage is set forward of the building line of the listed building.

Regarding the removal of the existing staircase and insertion of a new staircase, the new door from the back hall to replace the existing sliding door and the insulation of the garage, the proposed works would only involve the removal of modern fabric and would have no impact on the significance of the listed building. Also regarding the insertion of two roof lights, Inserting two conservation roof lights, this would have no impact on any historic fabric, as the roof structure is modern. The proposed location would again have low impact on the appearance of the building as they are located to the rear pitch of the roof and would sit flush within the roof build up.

Kitchen and Snug – Regarding the removal of the modern window to the Snug and dropping the cill and removing the modern window to Kitchen and dropping the cill, the proposed work would result in the removal of some historic fabric but this would be low impact on the significance of the heritage asset. The openings would remain, albeit as doors rather than windows.

The proposed infilling in the opening between the kitchen and proposed infill, would not cause any harm to the listed building as the infill would be lightweight and ultimately reversible and a niche would be retained to show the location of the opening.

The infilling of the lower section of door to Snug and insertion of a casement window, it appears that this opening was previously a window, therefore, infilling the bottom section with coursed random rubble to match and inserting a new window would cause no harm to the listed building.

The removal of the suspended ceiling and insert roof light would cause no harm to the listed building since this is modern fabric. The insertion of a roof light would not result in the removal of any historic fabric, as it would be fitted between the rafters. The visual impact would also be low, as the rooflight would be largely concealed by the proposed infill and of a low profile, finished flush with the roof finishes.

The removal of the existing partitions and insertion of new partitions to form a separate WC would not have an impact on the significance of the listed building, since the partitions are entirely modern.

Clarity is required on the proposed works between the hall and the proposed infill, since from the proposed drawings it appears that this is being altered.

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 (knocking through of the original rear wall, removal of first floor bathroom, design of infill to be more subservient, design of replacement garage door) and clarity (works between hall and infill) are therefore required.