Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

18th January 2024

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Senior Conservation Officer
Wiltshire Council Conservation (Central)

Officer's Name: Becky Jones
Officer's Title: Senior Planning Officer

Application No: **PL/2023/11097 (PP)** **LBC is not required**
Erection of a detached dwelling and associated works
40 THE BOROUGH, DOWNTON, SALISBURY, SP5 3ND

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 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 207-9 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 203 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.

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."

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."

Site and assets considered:

40 The Borough is a grade II listed thatched cottage. Recent applications (LBC and planning) have been approved for the construction of a rear extension, together with the demolition of the modern garage to the side. These works are underway.

Proposal:

The current application seeks PP for a new house at the rear of the plot, together with a shared driveway, two parking spaces for number 14 and the revision of the boundary for the cottage (ie a smaller garden).

Issues: impact on the setting of the listed building, impact on the conservation area.

Information considered/provided: Paragraph 200 requires that applicants describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.

The agent has submitted an 'all in one' document that covers materials, design, access, as well as a heritage statement. There appears to be no assessment of the setting of the cottage or the impact of the proposal on this part of the conservation area.

However, paragraph 201 also provides for the local planning authority to make its own assessment of impact and the following heritage recommendations are offered on this basis.

Furthermore, the previous applications relating to the listed building were accompanied by a statement of significance (David Stirling).

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."

David Stirling's previous report noted that the plot was previously two narrow burgage plots which have combined at some point. The 1841 tithe map does not indicate the presence of a dwelling on the most easterly one.

The report also noted, amongst other things, that the long burgage plot contributed to its significance (see page 10).

In addition, the adopted Downton Conservation Area appraisal notes:

'*The valuable survival of a significant number of thatched buildings individually and in groups'*;

And

'*Deep, narrow, open burgage plots often backing onto open countryside to the south of The Borough'*

Assessment:

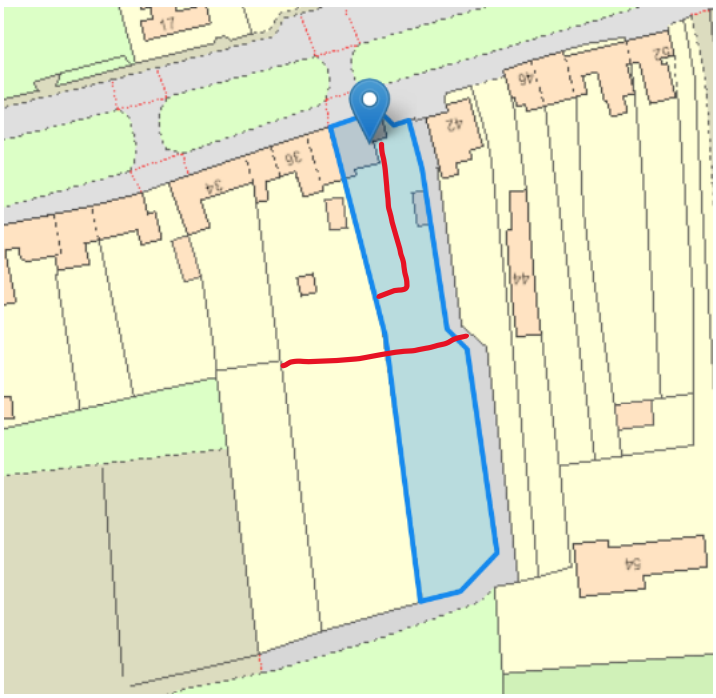
The proposed footprint of the new dwelling broadly respects the burgage plot, however, its width does encroach and I can see no reason why the depth of the proposed building cannot be reduced.

In terms of its height, I strongly recommend that the building is reduced to single-storey with attic, that the footprint is reduced and that the garage is omitted (why is this necessary?). Indeed, the accommodation requirements are ambitious ie a 4 bedroom house with en-suites and dressing rooms to two of the bedrooms. If this were a two bedroomed single-storey structure, it might suit a more elderly couple or a wheelchair user perhaps?

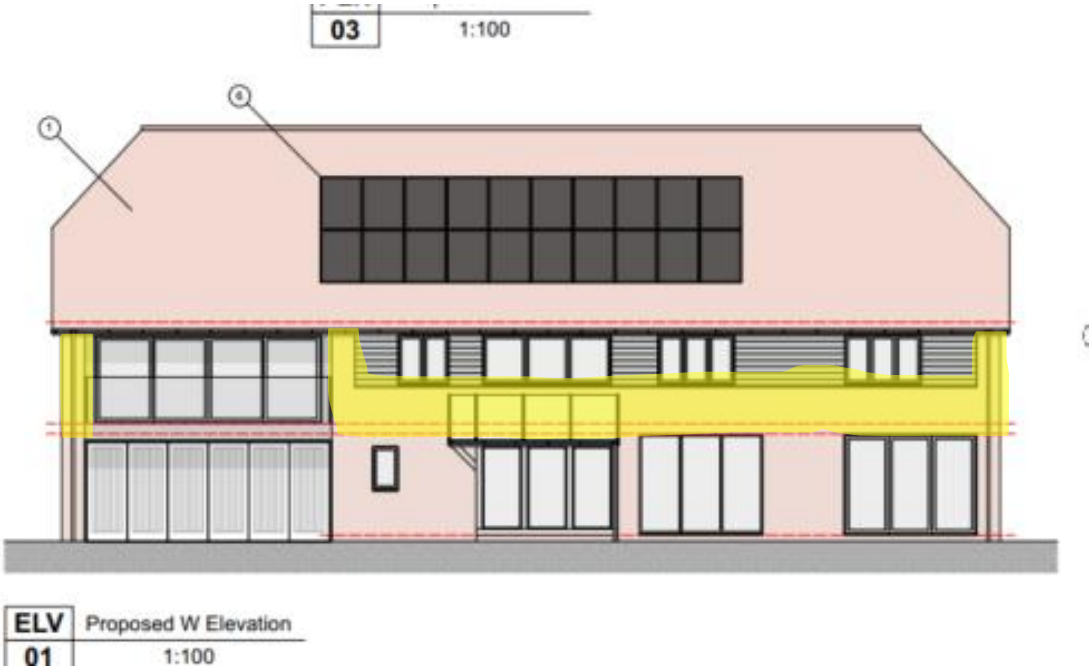
In terms of the design, the architect talks about a barn-like building. All well and good but large barns are not a character of burgage plots and clearly would have been formerly associated with a farmhouse – none here on this site. I would have thought a contemporary single-storey structure would be more 'honest' and clearly read as a modern addition addition to the townscape.

In respect of the proposed elevations, the porch interrupts the linear qualities of the building and adds a fussy component at odds with the 'barn-like' qualities. The windows and large areas of glass of domestic character are too, at odds with the character of a converted agricultural building (which I am assuming this is aping). I also find curious that the burnt timber cladding only partially conceals the first floor and stops short of the large glazed sliding doors. As such, it seems 'hesitant' and reads as superficial applied cladding rather than an integral element.

Also, I consider the proposed garden for 40 The Borough to be **too reduced** and compromising of the setting of the cottage. I would like to see a more generous plot retained. Indeed, I would suggest it needs to be at least as long as the comparative plots further westwards.



Also I wonder why there are the two car parking spaces within the red line for the new house? Are they not for 40 The Borough?)



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. It makes clear that any harm to a designated heritage asset **and its setting** requires clear and convincing justification.

In my view, the proposals will result in harm to the setting of the listed building in view of its proposed scale, design and proposed plot layout. In respect of the conservation area (which is not only appreciated from public spaces), the proposal is of a significant scale such that it would be visually over-bearing when viewed from the plot, the rear of the cottage and also the footpath.

In terms of the design, I consider the barn idiom to be inappropriate in this particular setting and, in view of the treatment, to fail to meet the locally distinctive test.

As is stands, I consider the proposal fails to meet the requirements of sections 66 and 72 of the PLBCA Act 1990, CP57 and CP58 as well as Chapter 16 of the NPPF (in particular paragraphs 20312).