CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/09941
Date of Inspection:	
Date site notice posted:	Sent to site owner
Date of press notice:	
SITE ADDRESS:	Trafalgar Park, Witherington Road, Downton SP5 3QR
PROPOSAL:	Minor alterations to the House including; removal of 2 no. louvres, reinstatement of flanking walls to garden steps, new door and steps to north wing and modifications to layout at first floor in Mansion House.

POLICIES

Wiltshire Core Strategy CP 58

Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Chapter 16 of the NPPF (revised July 2021)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Downton Parish Council: defer to conservation officer and senior planning officer

Historic England (letter dated 22/12/2023): '*We also have no objection in principle to the rebuilding of the flanking walls as a backdrop to the rear steps. We will however point out that the reinstatement does not appear to be based on the original plan…..This might suggest that the rear steps were altered at some point.' 'With regard to the internal alterations……This appears to be a less intrusive proposal than the approved scheme, as it retains the general proportions of the historic rooms and much to its decorative features. It is however not a neutral proposal: the creation of the new opening between C4 and C5 will cause further loss o original fabric and a change to the historic floor plan*…' '***This intervention will carry a degree of harm. We consider this to be less than substantial and your Authority will need to consider whether this is outweighed by the public benefits…'***

Officer comment: the previous approval was subject of HE comments and no objections were raised (nor by the LPA). The current application seeks to swap a new opening with a new opening and as such, there is no additional new opening required that would impact on historic fabric. In view of this, and having discussed it with my manager, I consider the proposals acceptable on balance.

The Gardens Trust: having looked at application, do not wish to comment.

Archaeology (WC): no archaeological concerns

Georgian Group: In their email of the 3/1/2024, the GG said: '*As discussed with you last month, we have no comments on the first three elements but the revised works to the first floor do raise some concerns. It is now proposed to create a new opening between C4 and C5 (D6). This intervention will entail additional loss of historic fabric and disruption to the historic planform/circulation and therefore a degree of less than substantial harm to significance. The need for this new opening has not been explained and the proposal is therefore not supported by the clear and convincing justification required by the NPPF (December 2023, para 206). We recommend your authority seeks further explanation and justification from the applicant in respect of this intervention and look forward to remaining closely involved as the programme of work moves forward. '*

Officer comment: a further justification for the works was received from the architect. On balance, it is considered that they have provided sufficient justification for this proposed alteration and that it would not cause further additional harm to the listed building.

REPRESENTATIONS

None received

THE HERITAGE ASSET

Trafalgar House is a grade I listed house, with associated separately listed structures, set within a registered park and garden. The house was listed at grade I in 1960. It is a palladian house built in 1733 and of exceptional interest, hence the listing at grade I. In addition to the house, the stables are listed at grade II, Standlynch Chapel at grade II*, and in the immediate environs of the house, the balustrading at the front of the house (grade II) and the steps and dwarf walls to the rear gardens. The listing for the latter reads as follows:

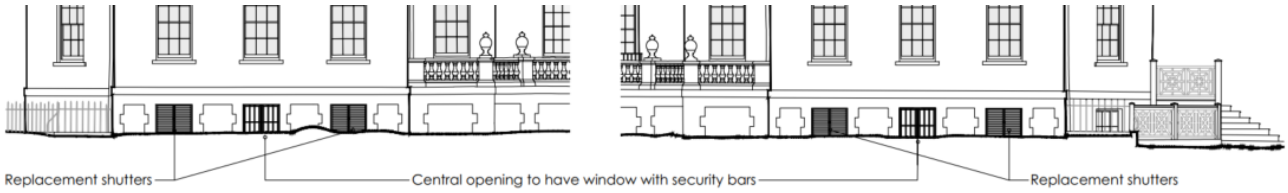
'Two flights of 6 stone steps up to garden entrance of house, with Flemish bond brick dwarf walls with moulded stone coping and urn finials on piers'.



THE PROPOSALS

Proposed replacement shutters main house (lower ground floor)

The lower ground floor of the west elevation of both pavilion buildings have shutters (3 a piece). The proposal is to replace the two outer shutters in both pavilions (ie 4 in total) and install a window into the central opening (with security bars).



North Pavilion - West Elevation Proposed
Scale: 1:100 @ A1, 1:50 @ A3

South Pavilion - West Elevation Proposed
Scale: 1:100 @ A1, 1:50 @ A3
0 2000 4000 6000 8000 10000

Section of walling north elevation – either side of central doorway/steps **(retrospective)**

This element is **retrospective**. The proposal is for a dwarf flanking wall on either side of the steps, in stone and detailing to match the steps. The D&A statement refers to this as 'reinstatement'.

North Pavilion, east elevation – treatment of door

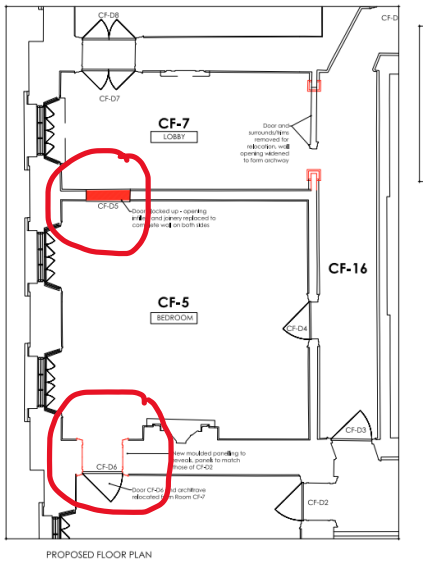
The application seeks to replace the existing door with one that reflects the character of the adjacent sash window with panelling below.

The D&A&Heritage statement says '2 new steps in stone to replace temporary timber steps). Constructed in Purbeck stone (to match elsewhere) with an inset metal handrail.

Mansion House (ie central block).

According to the architect *'The only alterations proposed not already approved are forming the new single doorway and closing up the single doorway from the central bedroom (CF-5) to the*

smaller bedroom (CF-7).' Subsequent communications clarified that the fireplace will be retained and is shown on the revised plans.



Issues:

Blocking of one doorway and creation of a new doorway in historic wall

THE LEGISLATIVE/POLICY FRAMEWORK

Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 says:

'*In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority…… shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building* ***or its setting****….'*

Paragraph 197 of the NPPF says:

'In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets……'

ASSESSMENT

Shutters

The shutters are beyond reasonable repair, as such, the proposed replacement with matching detailing is considered acceptable. Regarding omitting the shutters to the central window, this will allow more light into the associated rooms and therefore enable them to better used which ultimately benefits the rooms and building as a whole.

Flanking walls to steps

This work has already been completed. The work has been undertaken to match the likely original detail (or a modified detail) and in matching stone. As such, the new retaining walls enhance the interest of the steps and the setting of the house.

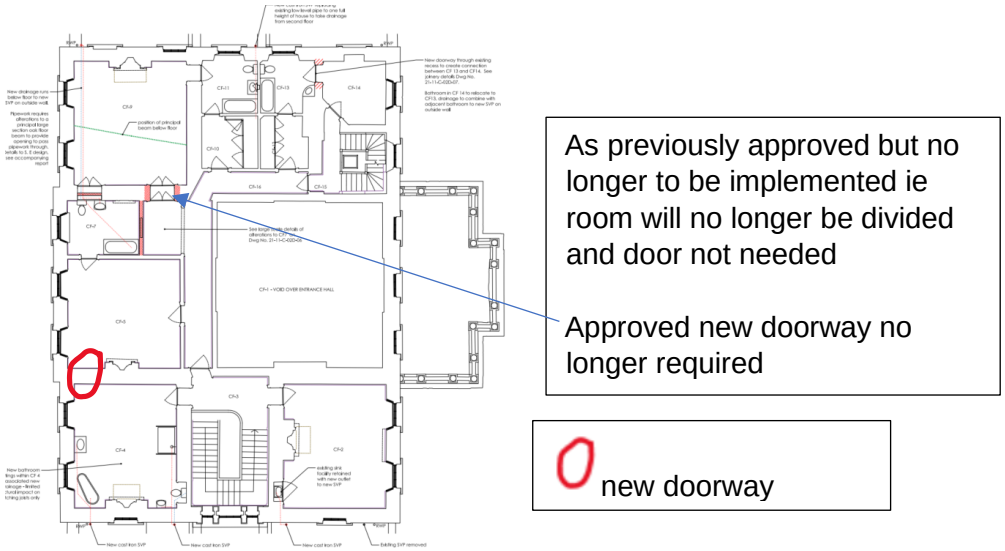
North Wing Entrance

The existing door is not of historic interest. The proposed replacement door would be more appropriate to the elevation of the north pavilion and as such is acceptable. The existing steps would be replaced by stone steps and a modest handrail. The stone steps would be more visually pleasing than the existing arrangement and as such, is considered acceptable.

Internal changes

This is the most controversial aspect. Significant changes at first floor – particularly in relation to the decorative wallpaper room (C7) have already been approved. The revised proposals are less impactful ie the room is no longer to be divided. The fireplace is retained.

The formation of a new opening between room C7 and C4 will result in the loss of historic fabric (ie wall), however, they are no longer proposing an opening between CF5 and CF4 so essentially swapping one opening for another, and indeed the position of the proposed would reflect an enfilade arrangement and in that sense would be architecturally more appropriate.



Drawing 21-11-C-02-02

5.17 of the original report:

'The rooms on the west side of the first floor with their commanding views over the parkland are the principal bedrooms of the house and form an important suite. As such, the connecting doors are important. The central bedroom (Bedroom 3 on the existing plans), i.e., Earl Nelson's bedroom, is the most architecturally interesting. The significance of the adjoining dressing room lies in its room size, simplicity and connectivity to the Nelson bedroom. The Chinese style wallpaper was relocated to the room in the 1950s or 60s, is poorly fitting and not appropriate stylistically.'

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE with conditions