CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/09957
Application Type:	Householder planning permission
Site Inspection:	
Consultation ends:	29 December 2023
Case officer:	Selina (Nina) Parker-Miles

Site Address:	Littleton Mill House, Littleton, Semington, Trowbridge, BA14 6LQ
Proposal:	Replacement roof for conservatory, new doors to replace garage doors, new roof lights and internal changes
Recommendation:	Approve with Conditions

Proposal and Site Description

The application relates to the Grade II listed Littleton Mill House, a detached dwelling located within a small settlement of detached properties to the south of Bowerhill in Melksham. The host dwelling lies within the vicinity of several listed buildings and occupies a rural location adjacent to Semington Brook. The application site lies within the consultation zone of the Bath and Bradford on Avon Special Area of Conservation for bats.

The proposed scheme seeks permission for a replacement roof to the conservatory, new doors to replace the existing garage doors with the addition of roof lights within the garage building and various internal changes. The proposed scheme is also subject to a sister application for listed building consent, reference PL/2023/10266.

Policies

National Context:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Local Context:

Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) adopted 2015
CP2 Delivery Strategy
CP29 – Spatial Strategy for the Trowbridge Community Area
CP50 - Geology and Biodiversity
CP57 - Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
CP58 - Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment
CP60 – Sustainable Transport
CP64 – Demand Management
Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026: Car Parking Strategy (March 2015)

Key Issues

Principle of Development
Impact on the Setting and Significance of the Listed Building
Impact on the Setting of the Listed Buildings Nearby
Neighbouring Amenity
Highways Impact
Ecology

Relevant Planning History
W/89/01586/LBC Conservatory - Approve
W/02/01725/LBC Removal of garage doors, rebuilding of front of garage with new single door - Approve

Consultation Responses
Semington Parish Council - '*The Parish Council requests that this application is forwarded to the Conservation Office for commen*t'
Wiltshire Council Conservation Officer - Objection

Representations
Consultation consisted of advertisement by site notice and neighbour notification. No representation letters were received.

Planning Considerations and Assessment
Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require that the determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Principle of Development
The proposed development comprises alterations and additions to the host dwelling set within the settlement boundary of Trowbridge. The proposed development would be wholly within the residential curtilage associated with this dwelling and as such the principle of development is acceptable subject to the following considerations.

Impact on the Grade II Listed Building
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. Section 66 requires that special regard be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings. The NPPF outlines government policy for planning. It sets out three overarching objectives for the planning system in the interests of achieving sustainable development – an economic objective of building a strong economy, a social objective of fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places and an environmental objective of protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.

Chapter 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out policies concerning heritage and sustainable development and requires a balanced approach. 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.

Littleton Mill House is a late 18th century Grade II listed detached house, the property is listed for its special architectural or historic interest. The area affected by the current proposal is a modern conservatory to the rear of the two storey house, positioned between two rear single storey service structures.

The official list entry from Historic England states;
'SEMINGTON LITTLETON MILL LANE ST 96 SW (north side) 5/203 Littleton Mill House GV II
Mill owners house, now detached house. Late C18. Coursed rubble stone, concrete tiled roof with gable end stone stacks and coped verges. Two-storey and attic, 3-window. Central 3-panelled door with semi-circular fanlight and flat stone hood on brackets, pair of 12-pane sashes with 'horns' either side. Plat band to first floor; central sash with pair either side, plat band over lintels. Three C20 flat-headed attic dormers to roof. C20 garage attached to right return. Built as residence for mill owner or manager of Littleton Mill (q.v.)'

The conservatory would be replaced with an insulated timber framed structure, with an insulated, tiled roof, with rooflights inserted and 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 with the door from the snug to the garden 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, with the ground floor bathroom 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 converted to residential use, with the existing staircase to the first-floor office replaced, with 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 and a pair of rooflights would be inserted on the rear elevation.



Image of the existing conservatory set between the two single storey structures



Existing (left) and proposed (right) rear elevation



Existing (left) and proposed (right) front elevation

The conservation officer has objected to the proposed infill extension to the rear elevation, citing concerns that the replacement building would not be subservient in its proportions, with the form of the proposed hip roof being too bulky in comparison to the existing service wings. The officer

also objected to the potential loss of historic fabric by the knocking through of the rear elevation to create an opening for the bathroom. Concerns were also raised in relation to the proposed suburban style doors that would be inserted on the front elevation of the garage building that would replace the existing garage door. The full extent of the conservation officers comments are included within the sister application for listed building Consent reference PL/2023/09306.

Planning officers have attended a site visit and appraised the potential impact of the development on the Grade II listed building and the setting of the listed buildings nearby.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed infill to the rear would utilise a roof that would sit marginally higher than the abutting single storey rear extensions, officers are cognisant that the infill would still be subservient to the host dwelling as a subordinate addition. The infill would extend over the existing footprint of built development and whilst the hipped roof would be a deviation from the existing built form of the conservatory the extension would still maintain a set back from the rear elevation of those extensions.

The proposal would not result in any loss of historic fabric given that the conservatory to be removed is a modern addition that gained permission in 1989. Whilst the style of the building would deviate from the existing rear extensions the use of high quality materials similar to existing is supported and it is considered that the development would constitute a sympathetic addition to the host dwelling that would integrate into the surrounding setting. A full assessment of the impact on the Grade II listed building, appraising all proposed internal and external works is included within the officer's report of the associated sister application for Listed Building Consent PL/2023/09306.

It is considered that the extension would by virtue of its height, scale and design constitute a complementary addition to the host dwelling that would appear commensurate to the size of the property and plot. The development would therefore comply with Policy CP58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Chapter 16 of the NPPF.

Impact on the setting of the listed buildings nearby
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 into account 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".

NPPF paragraph 200 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.

Littleton Mill House forms part of a cluster of listed buildings In Littleton located at the end of a single-track road, the collective buildings form an attractive setting within this rural setting. To the north west of the host dwelling lies the Grade II listed Mill Farmhouse and Grade II Littleton Mill with the retaining walls of the weir being Grade II listed also, as illustrated by the black hatching in the map insert below.



Therefore, any works to the host dwelling have to be appraised in relation to any impact upon the immediate setting of these listed buildings.
Given the limited footprint of the proposed scheme, replacing existing built form and limited internal works it is assessed that the development proposal would not cause harm to the setting of the listed buildings within the vicinity. The development therefore complies with Core Policies, 57 and 58 of the Core Strategy and Paragraph 200 and 203 of the NPPF.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity
Core Policy 57 of The WCS states that applications for new development must be accompanied by appropriate information to demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through having regard to the compatibility of adjoining buildings and uses, the impact on the amenities of existing occupants, and ensuring that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself, including the consideration of privacy, overshadowing, vibration, and pollution (e.g. light intrusion, noise, smoke, fumes, effluent, waste or litter)

The replacement extension would be positioned to the rear of the host dwelling with windows overlooking the applicant's private residential amenity space. Similarly the rooflights that would be inserted within the roof of the garage would overlook the private residential amenity space associated with the host dwelling. Given the detached nature of the host dwelling, with extended separation distances to any immediate neighbours no overlooking concerns are raised.

Given the single storey nature of the replacement extension and the limited scope of the works, no concerns are raised in relation to overbearing or overshadowing to any neighbouring occupiers. For these reasons, the development proposals would comply with Policy CP57 of the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy

Highways Impact

Impact on parking provision – Core Policy 64 (Demand Management) seeks to manage the demand for vehicle parking and confirms that residential parking standards are to be based on minimum parking standards. In order to comply with the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026: Car Parking Strategy (March 2015) two on-site car parking spaces would be required for a 2 bed dwelling (standard min. size 2.4m x 4.8m).

The proposed scheme would remove the existing garage by converting it to habitable accommodation therefore 2 off road parking spaces would need to be provided within the front driveway. The host dwelling benefits from an extended off road parking area to the front elevation of the garage (as illustrated by the site visit photo below) that accommodates the off road parking of several vehicles, therefore no concerns are raised in terms of highway safety.



The proposal retains the existing access and would not give rise to significant harm in terms of highway safety. As such the proposal accords with policies CP60, CP61 and CP64 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Paragraph 115 of the NPPF.

Ecology

The application site sits within the Bath and Bradford on Avon Special Area of Conservation for bats and as this application involves disturbance to the existing roof due consideration has to be given to the potential disturbance of any bats because of the proposed development.

The extension to the rear that would be removed is a glass conservatory style structure that is unlikely to support any habitats therefore the council considers it would be unreasonable to require the applicant to submit a bat survey because this could be considered disproportionate to the scale of development.

Nevertheless, anyone undertaking this development should be aware that bats and their roosting places are protected at all times by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Planning permission for development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation or substitute for the need to obtain a bat licence if an offence is likely. If bats or evidence of bats is found at any stage of development, the applicant is advised to follow the advice of a professional ecologist or to contact Natural England's Batline through the internet.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve with conditions

Conditions: (2)

1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:
Location Plan
Existing Block Plan DWG No 4295-002
Existing Ground Floor Plan DWG No 4295-003
Existing First Floor Plan DWG No 4295-004
Existing Elevations DWG No 4295-005
Proposed Block Plan DWG No 4295-007
Proposed Ground Floor Plan DWG No 4295-008
Proposed First Floor Plan DWG No 4295-009
Proposed Elevations DWG No 4295-010
Proposed Section AA DWG No 4295-011
All Plans Received 17.11.2023

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Informatives: (1)

3 If bats or evidence of bats are found during the works, the applicant is advised to stop work and follow advice from an independent ecologist or to contact Natural England's Bat Line through the internet.