CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/10266
Application Type:	Listed building consent (Alt/Ext)
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 householder consent, reference PL/2023/09957.

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

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 - Objects for the following reasons:

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 returnof 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, 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.

Greater 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 (this can be conditioned)

Representations
Consultation consisted of advertisement by site notice and neighbour notification. No third party 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 works to an existing residential property set in an established residential curtilage within the settlement boundary of Trowbridge. The proposed works would be wholly within the residential curtilage 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.

Planning officers 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 wing extensions, the infill addition 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 respectful and suitable set back position when realted to the rear wing elevations.

The proposed loss of the modern conservatory which gained permission in 1989 raises no concern. Whilst the style of the new addition 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. 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 woudl have a neutral effect on the listed building mindful of what already exists. Whilst the conservation officer argues the proposed addition would not be subservient, the development management team disgaree. The addition would be read in realtion to the rear wing additions that would remain as well as the original main part of the dwelling. The infill would only be marginally higher than the existing conservatory, but in terms of build materials, would be of higher specifications and in the planning balance, the build quality balances out the marginal proposed increased bulk (created by teh different roof design).

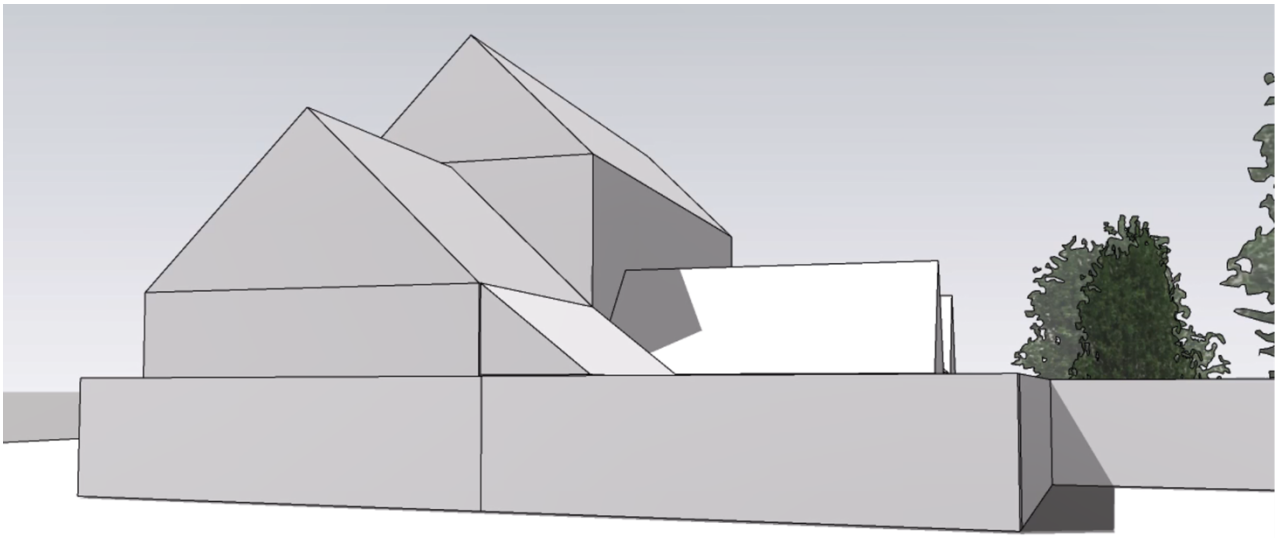
The agent has confirmed that no works are proposed between the hall and the proposed infill and that whilst there would be some limited loss of historic fabric created by the removal of part of the exterior wall to create a bathroom, and the works are deemed to be necessary for modern family needs and with the betterment provided by the new addition and the removal of the rather awkward designed existing conservatory, the limited loss of stonework to create a new opening is accepted as a public benefit for the viable ongoing residential use of the listed property.

Whilst the conservation officer's comments are duly noted, planning officers are not satsified the grounds for objection would succeed on appeal. The garage door design based onjection is not sustaianble. as the existing garage door is modern and its proposed replacement would be no more harmful than anything that already exists that is not original historoc fabric. The propsoed garage door would include some glazing, which in part, would respect the vertical proportions of the existing fenestration on the front elevation of Littleton Mill House, but would not compete with the main facade and its impressive features. The conservation based concern on the garage doors is overly fussy and is not accepted.

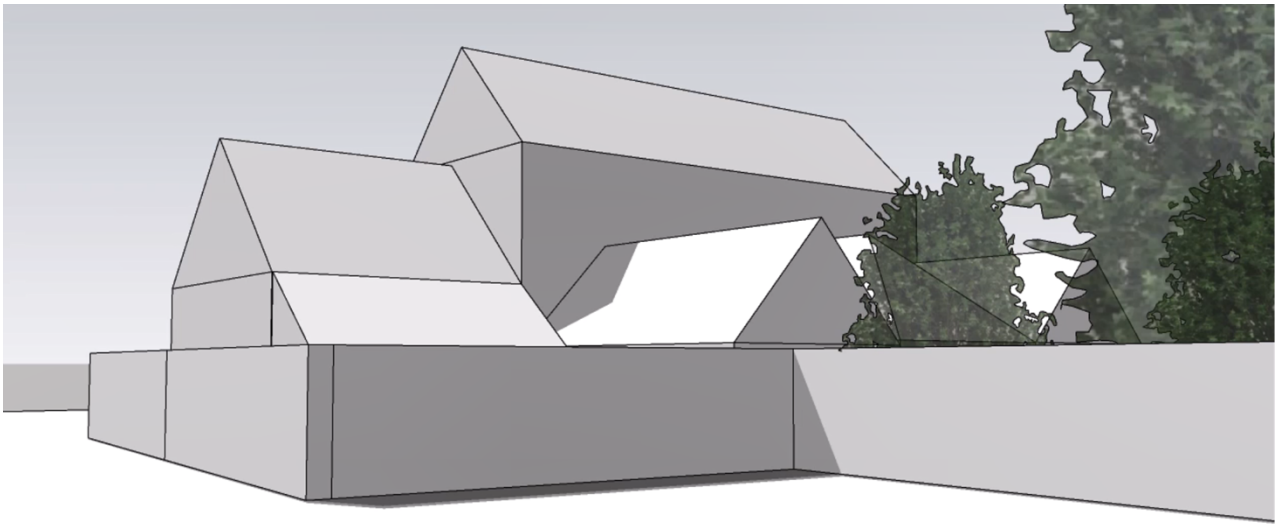
The above position is also supported by the following analysis:

The applicant's architects created a simple 3d massing model to illustrate the proposed development and to add more detail. The width of the infill is already established and is set by the

two historic single storey structures. Therefore, the only opportunity to make the infill subservient to the historic forms is through the form of the new roof.



The hipped form has been proposed because it allows the infill roof to sit back from the two historic gables. This reduces the volume of the infill, allowing it to recede and have a lower visual presence within the setting than the two historic gables. The height of the infill would only be very slightly increased but this allows for an efficient and compact bathroom to be inserted in the roof pitch (described below) and the hipped roof form has been chosen to minimise the presence of the infill within the setting.



The garden setting includes boundary walls and mature trees, with buildings located in close proximity on both sides. These elements limit longer views to the rear elevation of Littleton Mill. The hipped form of the proposed infill roof reduces its presence within the wider setting as it is not possible to view the three roofs at any great distance.

From the immediate and garden setting, the proposed hipped form would be subservient to the more prominent historic gables and has a reduced presence when compared to the existing flush glazed gable.

The supporting heriatge assessment identifies the limited proposed loss of some wall fabric that would be needed to be removed in order to form the opening to the new bathroom. The removal of fabric to form an opening would not reduce the ability to understand the historic plan form or confuse the development of the building. This alteration would be legible in the development of the building, particularly as the bathroom would clearly relate to the proposed infill, and the loss would be limited, and would in any case be balanced out by the betterment being advanced by a more respectful new extension on the rear and the removal of the 1980s approved conservatory.

Adding a rear bathroom off the half landing of a staircase is a typical and traditional solution that would allow a second bathroom to be added without changing the internal plan form (albeit fabric would be removed from the exterior wall). In addition, the bathroom has been proposed in the new roof void of the infill to avoid proposing more extensive alterations to the plan form at first and second floor, where the potential 'harm' (fabric removal and alteration to plan form) would be much greater.

For these reasons, and despite the removal of fabric, and as part of a full and wider analysis, the proposed opening would not cause harm to the overall significance of the listed building.

The applicants own the land in front of the garage, therefore the garage is not required for parking, so there would be no reduction in parking provision.

The conservation officer asked for clarity on the proposed works between the hall and the proposed infill, however no works are proposed between the hall and the proposed infill.

On the basis of teh above, the development would 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. A full assessment of the proposed development is included within the officer's report of the associated sister application for householder consent PL/2023/09957.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve with conditions

Conditions:

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 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.

3 The rooflights hereby approved shall be of the ‘conservation’ type with a single vertical glazing bar and mounted flush with the roof slope.

REASON: In the interests of preserving the character and appearance of the listed building and its setting.