CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/11091
Application Type:	Listed building consent (Alt/Ext)
Site Inspection:	
Consultation ends:	08 February 2024
Case officer:	Alex Marsh

Site Address:	The Old Rectory, Lyneham, Chippenham, SN15 4PQ
Proposal:	Minor alterations to first floor interior layout, removal of one window and alterations to joinery in outbuilding.
Recommendation:	Approve

Relevant Policies:
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 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.

Planning Practice Guidance Historic Environment provides context to the NPPF.

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 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.”

Relevant Heritage Assets:
The Old Rectory Wootton Bassett Road Lynham grade II

Site Description:
The Old Rectory is a to storey former Rectory dating from the early mid-19th century. The primary elevation to the garden is orientated south and has an ashlar limestone frontage to the south with crenelated canted bays with stone mullions and Tudor arch lights with cast iron casements to each side of a central crenelated porch with angled buttresses carried up as towers. The west gable onto the road is Flemish bond brick with burnt headers and ashlar stone quoins there is a stone slate roof with dormers. The plan for the early 19th century house has a central hallway with flanking reception rooms with a cross wing to the right. The rear wing appears to be later 19th century in Flemish bond brick work with slate roof and the rear north gable of the wing and outbuildings are painted brick.

The Old Rectory is located on the northern edge of Lynham to the east side of a bend in the A3102 Road and behind a limestone wall to about 1.5 m.

Proposal:
Minor alterations to first floor interior layout, removal of one window and alterations to joinery in outbuilding.

Relevant planning history:
N/A

Issues:
The impact of the proposals to the significance of the listed building.

The Information Considered:
The application includes a Floor Plans and Elevations, detailed vertical and horizontal window sections at scale 1:1, Heritage Assessment and Significance Assessment and Design and Access Statement

Significance:
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 architectural, or historic as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 S 1.

‘Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.’ Historic England assesses significance of setting in a similar manner, referring to evidential, historic, aesthetic, and communal values of a place.

In this case significance comes from its formal architecture, its form, layout and architectural expression/detailing and use of high-quality design materials which have significant aesthetic and architectural interest.

Discussion of impact of proposals on the identified significance:

The proposal is to remove a tall fixed light window that is subdivided in 3 x 5 lights that is split between the rear ground floor corridor and side landing/corridor.

The window would appear to be related to an historic location of a rear service staircase as it cuts across the existing inserted floor. It is located in the rear range of the building but unlikely to be as suggested by the applicant's statement to be 20th century and relate to the development of the rear range. The external brick work while Flemish bond is of a different phase more likely to relate to the original building in the early 19th century characterised by Flemish bond with burnet header bricks. There is also a straight joint with this range and the rear wing. The rear wing floor level is at half landing level to the front to the house and access to the current bathroom requires steps up to the inner landing tall window at first floor level and bathroom further supporting them to be part of the earlier phase of development in the early 19th century.

The window has an historic function and informs an element of the historic development, plan form and phasing of the house. Following discussion with the applicant they have proposed to replace the window with an inset reveal in matching Flemish bond brickwork.

The other internal alterations in this tall window at first floor look to remodel the plan form to extend the bathroom into the corridor which also takes in the connecting door from bedroom 3 and block up the connecting door to bedroom 1.

This alteration is combined with the opening up at the back of an existing cupboard between bedroom 1 and bedroom 3 to create a linked dressing room to bedroom 1 and creating a master bedroom suite from this bedroom with linked dressing room and ensuite bathroom. The internal steps and cupboards to the rear corridor between the landing and the bathroom will be removed to form a linen cupboard of the half landing. While the loss of the window will have a minor harm on the understanding of the floor plan of the original house this is partly mitigated by having a brick reveal to indicate the location and size of the former window. The internal alterations to the main house are minor and legible and can assist in securing the future use of a heritage asset in support of its long-term conservation.

A further minor alteration is proposed to the Flemish brick-built outbuilding with slate roof used as a gym. It is evident in the 1st edition OS plan and appears to be contemporary with the main house as early to mid-19th century. It is proposed to remove an existing three light casement window and reuse the opening taking out the cill below to install full height glazing.

A new conservation rooflight will also be added to the inner south roof slope. The alteration to extend the glazing and ad a rooflight are considered to have a low or neutral impact on the significance of the small outbuilding and setting of the main house.

Heritage Conclusion and balance:

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.

The NPPF paragraph 209 allows that a level of harm may be offset by public benefits, which could include conservation benefits.
The loss of the tall former stair window to the rear (north) elevation will have a minor harm on the understanding of the floor plan of the original house this is partly mitigated by having a brick reveal infill panel to indicate the location and size of the former window.

The alterations to the glazing to the brick and slate outbuilding to remove an existing three light casement window and reuse the opening taking out the cill below to install full height glazing and installing a new conservation rooflight to the inner south roof slope are considered to have a low or neutral impact on the significance of the small outbuilding and setting of the main house.

These alterations to the main house and outbuilding are minor and legible and National Planning Policy Guidance advice on the Historic Environment which advises public benefits can override low level harm where they include securing the future use of a heritage asset in support of its long-term conservation.

Conditions: (2)

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: Site Location and Block Plan No, 22115,100 Scale 1:1250 & 1:500@A3 date received 20.12.2023; Existing and Proposed Elevations (Proposed House elevation superseded) 22115.122 Scale 1:100@A3 date received 20.12.2023; Ground Floor Plans 22115.120 Scale 1:100@A3 date received 20.12.2023; First Floor Plans 22115.121 Scale 1:100@A3 date received 20.12.2023; Window Infill Section Detail 22115.124 Scale 1:100@A3 date received 11.03.2024.

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