CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/08917
Application Type:	Householder planning permission
Site Inspection:	
Consultation ends:	19 February 2024
Case officer:	Lucy Rutter-Dowd

Site Address:	Lower Farm Cottages, Manningford Abbots, SN9 6HY
Proposal:	Remove areas of tile and reinstate thatch to the roof. Replace areas of thatch in poor condition. New area of brickwork and insert new eyebrow window and remove service pipes from north east elevation.
Recommendation:	Approve with Conditions

Proposal and Site Description

The application relates to Lower Farm Cottages, historically built as one cottage and later extended and split into two with various internal and external alterations taking place over the years. The building is built with red bricks and timber framed windows with a mix of thatch and tiles to the roof. The property is grade II listed and benefits from a detached modern garage and an historic outbuilding which is in need of repair. The Historic England Listing description reads as follows:

MANNINGFORD MANNINGFORD ABBOTS SU 15 NW (west side) 2/75 Lower Farmhouse II Farmhouse, now 2 cottages. Late C18. Brick with thatched roof. Two storeys 4 bays with rear (east) 2-storey extension and right bay of C19-early C20, containing entrance. Timber casement window. Axial stack and stack to north gable. Fireplace in third bay with high timber overmantel beam.

The site lies within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is associated with the neighbouring grade II listed Old Rectory, and adjoining farm yard. Recent planning permission (PL/2023/02151) saw general refurbishments of the property and reinstatement to one dwelling. The current proposal was omitted from the previous/recent scheme due to lack of ecology reports. The current proposal involves removing the tiled areas of the roof, reinstating full thatch and installation of an eyebrow window. The works required ecological surveys due to the impacts to the roof of an historic building and proximity to surrounding Priority Habitats.

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:

• Core Policy 50 – Biodiversity and geodiversity
• Core Policy 51 – Landscape
• Core Policy 57 - Ensuring high quality design and place shaping
• Core Policy 58 - Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment

Constraints

• North Wessex Downs National Landscape (NL)
• Grade II Listed Building
• Priority Habitat
• River Avon Special Area of Conservation

Key Issues

• Design and Visual Impact.
• Impact on the landscape setting of the NL
• Heritage Impacts
• Ecology

Relevant Planning History

PL/2023/02151 - Replacement windows, reinstatement of window, installation of air source heat pump, relocation of timber gates and access and internal alterations - Approve with Conditions
PL/2023/02545 - Replacement windows, reinstatement of window, installation of air source heat pump, relocation of timber gates and access and internal alterations - Approve with Conditions

Consultation Responses

Manningford Parish Council - No objection.

Conservation - Comments included within report.

Representations

None 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.

Design and Visual Impact

Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy states that "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." Proposals should seek to enhance local distinctiveness and have regard to existing townscapes, patterns of development and the historic environment and landscape setting.

From a planning perspective, there is little to assess in terms of scale design and materials. The proposed works will not result in an increase in the volume of the property. The replacement roof material will provide an appropriate and traditional design for the historic cottage. The repair of the outbuilding is considered acceptable providing this is done sympathetically and with matching materials.

Impact on the landscape setting of the AONB

CP51 of the WCS proposes that Development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character, while any negative impacts must be mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures.

The site lies within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (NL). However, due to the nature of the works involving minor external alterations within the curtilage of a well-established property, no harm will be caused to the landscape setting of the NL.

Heritage Impacts

The following comments have been received from the conservation officer:

"The proposal to replace the existing plain clay tiled sections of rear roof slope and insertion of an eyebrow window to this grade II listed cottage were initially proposed, and commented on, under a previous applications (refs. PL/2023/02545 (LBC) and PL/2023/02151 (PP)), but was removed from those proposals as the PP application required an ecological survey due to works to the roof being proposed.

These two elements have now been submitted under new applications, this being the LBC.

Comments on these works previously were as follows:
“As for replacing the tiles with thatch on the smaller portion of roof, whilst this is not something that would be unacceptable in principle, again it is the practicalities of the roofing material to take

into account – thatch as you know generally does not have guttering, and having the eaves of a higher thatched roof slope essentially discharging onto thatch below it will accelerate the wear of the thatch below. So again this is why the tiles are there, to prolong the life of the roofing material that is being subjected to two runoffs.
The insertion of the dormer will possibly cut into historic roof structure, and with no opening up to ascertain the situation, it is impossible to predict the impact of the proposals on historic fabric. Otherwise the provision of a rear dormer here is not untypical of later insertions into the roofs of thatched cottages in the local area."

Advice of a thatcher has been sought and although this has confirmed the initial concerns with regard to additional run-off of higher roof slopes onto lower roof slopes. The DAS states that sufficient lead flashing will be required, as well as thatch on the north-east elevation being 'completely renewed'. I am concerned over the 'complete renewal' of the thatch, as this would involve stripping it completely to the rafters and no historic assessment of this aspect of the works has been provided. I do wonder if this is actually what it proposed however, as it is usually only the top coat that is removed to reveal a sound base coat: if the former is proposed, further supporting information is required, although if the latter is proposed, this is usual maintenance of a thatched roof (based on the assumption that CWR is being used, as per the existing situation).

In relation to the former, it is acknowledged that there will be some intervention into the roof to provide an eyebrow dormer window, yet this type of intervention is traditional for such as cottage. However I am concerned that the size of the window proposed is too large for such an opening, and it appears at odds with those of more cottage-format on the ground floor beneath it. This should be amended to a simpler cottage window, with landscape format similar to those on the ground floor, as that proposed is not particularly sympathetic to the building, nor reflective of traditional dormer windows in vernacular cottages. In addition I would suggest that once opening up works have started, that a section drawing confirming the construction of the dormer window is provided, via condition."

A thatching method statement would also be required to confirm how the thatch will be laid, and whether or not the Dorset model is being introduced with regard to the building regulations.

In response to these comments, additional/revised information was submitted. The following comments were then received from the conservation officer:

"Amended plans have been received to reduce the size of the proposed rear dormer: this is an improvement on the initial proposals and addresses my concerns raised previously. The revised joinery details are also considered acceptable.

No thatching method statement has been provided, therefore this should be conditioned, along with a section drawing to confirm the construction of the dormer, once opening up works have been undertaken to inform the works."

Ecology

The initial response from the ecologist raised some concerns and requested that the bat survey report be updated to add further clarity and for mitigation to be clearly demonstrated on plan. The following comments were received following a round of re-consultation:

"The updated report confirms that serotine were not found roosting in the building and provided further justification for ruling out the presence of a brown long-eared bat maternity roost.

The following features for bats are now proposed and have been shown on a site plan: modified barge board to create crevice opportunities on the dwelling, a cavity bat box on the garage and 2 x Harlech woodstone bat boxes on trees.

Habitat Regulations Assessment

This development falls within the catchment of the River Avon Special Area of Conservation and is within the 6.4 km buffer zone of the Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area. However, as the proposals are for minor works to an existing dwelling and will not result in any increase in occupancy, there is no mechanism for adverse effect on either designated site. Further assessment under Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) is not required."

No further concerns have been raised subject to a condition securing the mitigation on site.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the proposed application seems fitting with regard to scale, design, and materials. The proposal is considered acceptable in the context of its surroundings and is in accordance with the general criteria set out in the aforementioned policies of the local development plan.

Conditions: (3)

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:

Doc Title: Application Form.
Drg Title: Ecology. Drg No: 4285-100.
Doc Title: Bat Survey Report. Produced by: Daniel Ahern Ecology. Dated: March 2024.
Drg Title: Existing Elevations and Section AA. Drg No: 4285-04.

Drg Title: Existing Plans. Drg No: 4285-3.
Drg Title: Location Plan.
Drg Title: Proposed Elevations. Drg No: 4285-08A.
Drg Title: Proposed Plans. Drg No: 4285-7.
Drg Title: Proposed Window Joinery. Drg No: 4285-09.

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

3 Bat roosts and bat access points will be incorporated into the development in accordance with Drawing no: 4285-100 and Bat Survey Report (Report ref: 4840.3) or as otherwise specified in a relevant European Protected Species Licence superseding this permission. The installation of these bat roosts and access features will be supervised by a professional ecologist and this part of the condition will be discharged when photographic evidence of installed features have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These bat roosts and access points will continue to be available for bats for the lifetime of the development.

REASON: To mitigate for impacts to bats arising from the development

Informatives: (3)

4 The roof space of Lower Farm Cottage is used as a bat roost. Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), it is an offence to harm or disturb bats or damage or destroy their roosts. Planning permission for development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation. The applicant is advised that a European Protected Species Licence will be required before any work is undertaken to implement this planning permission. Future conversion of the roof space to living accommodation or replacing the roof could also breach this legislation and advice should be obtained from a professional bat ecologist before proceeding with work of this nature.

5 The habitat within the proposed development site and the surrounding area is suitable for roosting, foraging and commuting bats. An increase in artificial lux levels can deter bats which could result in roost abandonment and/or the severance of key foraging areas. This will likely result in a significant negative impact upon the health of bat populations across the region. Artificial light at night can have a substantial adverse effect on biodiversity. Any new lighting should be for the purposes for safe access and security and be in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standards set out by the Institute of Lighting Engineers in their publication GN01:2021, ‘Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light’ (ILP, 2021), and Guidance note GN08/23 “Bats and artificial lighting at night”, issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of

Lighting Professionals.

6 The applicant should note that under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended) it is an offence to disturb or harm any protected species including for example, breeding birds and reptiles. The protection offered to some species such as bats, extends beyond the individual animals to the places they use for shelter or resting. Please note that this consent does not override the statutory protection
afforded to any such species. In the event that your proposals could potentially affect a protected species you should seek the advice of a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist and consider the need for a licence from Natural England prior to commencing works. Please see Natural England's website for further information on protected species.