CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2024/00048
Application Type:	Listed building consent (Alt/Ext)
Site Inspection:	
Consultation ends:	15 February 2024
Case officer:	Alex Marsh

Site Address:	Showell Farm, Showell, Chippenham, Wilts, SN15 2NU
Proposal:	Proposed removal of section of wall between 2 doors on the ground floor with insertion of rolled steel joist below kitchen beam
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:

Showell Farmhouse Showell grade II
The Old Barn Showell Farmhouse grade II

Site Description:
Showell Farmhouse dates from the 17th century. It is set back from the road on a large plot. It is two storeys plus attic in red brick with ashlar dressings and a low-pitched slate roof, coped gables and end stacks, and has some later single storey rear extension. It has a formal 2 storey 3 window front with ashlar plinth flush quoins moulded cornice parapet and flush window surrounds.

The windows are 20 pane outer windows with 12 pane to the first floor centre over ashlar doorcase which has a broad elliptical arched surround with keystone framing a full width fanlight.

The farmhouse dates from 1820 with a late 17th century attached wing. There is also a late 18th century granary and a barn to the south east of the house.

The farmhouse is located about 350 m north of the roundabout on the A 350 that serves the Wiltshire College and University at Lackham House

Proposal:
Proposed removal of section of wall between 2 doors on the ground floor with insertion of rolled steel joist below kitchen beam.

Relevant planning history:
2022/03334 Proposed alterations to dwelling including a replacement roof, fenestration alterations and internal works

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

The Information Considered:
The application includes a Floor Plans, annotated photographs, Historic Building Recording, Structural Plan and calculations 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 vernacular 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 a minor application following a more substantial set of alterations and improvements under Ref.2022/03334. For the remodelling of the plan form to the rear of the building to create a kitchen and dining room and the exposure of a former larger kitchen now a living room with vaulted ceiling and large kitchen fireplace and bread oven.

These approved works changed the plan form and left a stone pier between a pair of door openings where a partition sat under the cross beam (see existing plan for the previous consent Ref.2022/03334) that formed an inner larder room subdividing the current dining room into two within the late 17th century wing and had required the need for two openings to access the adjoining 19th century addition now the kitchen. The pier also supports a down stand of stonework reflecting the original extent of the walling.

The pier and timber lintel to the door openings support two cross beams, to the kitchen and to the dining room in the early wing a significant beam in the late 17th century wing with a chamfer and stop.

The original application drawings were not sufficiently detailed to understand how the steel work support would relate to the significant cross beam and its chamfer and stop.

An additional detail drawing has been provided by the structural engineer to show in detail how the new steel plate will be fixed and bolted into the existing beam to support the original cross beam in place. The beam steel plate will be bolted into new steel lintels supporting the the down stand stone work and the beam to the kitchen. This allows the significance of the beam to the dining room with the chamfer and stop to remain a visible feature.

Based on this detail drawing, it is now evident how the proposed steel supporting strapping will be inserted and integrated into the existing significant timber cross beam.

While the stone pier formed part of the original external wall of the rear range and it has been required to support the two cross beams to the adjoining rooms and has some significance.

The justification for the removal of the pier relates to creating an enlarged opening where there are currently parallel openings either side of the pier between kitchen and dining room. This new wider opening will be under a down stand that assists in understanding the original late 17th century wing outer wall location and plan form.

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.

On balance this proposal will rationalise this situation that resulted from previous consented alteration to the fabric and plan form and the National Planning Policy Guidance advice on the

Historic Environment advises public benefits can include Conservation benefits and 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 Plan scale 1:1250 @A4 date 02/01/2024; Existing Floor Plan, scale 1:50 @A1 dated 05/05/2023; Proposed Floor Plan, scale 1:50 @A1 dated 05/05/2023; Structural Plan Ground Floor Plan and Sections Ref. 1556/100 scale 1:50 @A3, dated December 2023; Structural Plans Existing and Proposed Timber Beam Details Ref 1556/200, scale 1:10 @A3, dated June 2024

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