Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

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Wiltshire Council Conservation (Central)

Officer's Name: Samatha Stockley
Officer's Title: Planning Officer

Application No: **PL/2023/03881 & PL/2023/04024**
Conversion of redundant barn to residential use to include minor extension replacements
The Barn, Oatridge Farm, Eastcourt, Malmesbury, SN16 9HR

Please find following comments in respect of the above application(s).

Recommendations:

X	Comment (for reasons set out below)
	Support
	Support subject to conditions (please set out below)
	Object (for reasons set out below)
	No objections

Scope of comments: the following comments relate to the built historic environment.

Policy: 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.

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 201-3 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 197 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.

The Council's Core Strategy 'Core Policy 58: Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment' requires that designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved and where possible enhanced. It is also required that distinctive elements of Wiltshire's historic environment, including non-designated heritage assets, which contribute to a sense of local character and identity will be conserved, and where possible enhanced.

The Council's Core Strategy CP 57: Ensuring high quality design requires a high quality of design in all new developments. Proposals are required to "demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through:

i. enhancing local distinctiveness by responding to the value of the natural and historic environment, relating positively to its landscape setting and the existing pattern of development…
ii. the retention and enhancement of existing important landscaping and natural features…
iii. responding positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting.

Site: The site is a Grade II listed building

Proposal: The proposal seeks change of use of the Grade II listed agricultural barn to form a five bed dwelling with new northeast and southwest extensions. Existing concrete block and corrugated iron annexes to be removed. New openings formed in the roof and walls to allow natural light to penetrate the historic barn.

Relevant planning history: N/A

Issues: Impact on the significance of the listed building, impact on setting of listed building

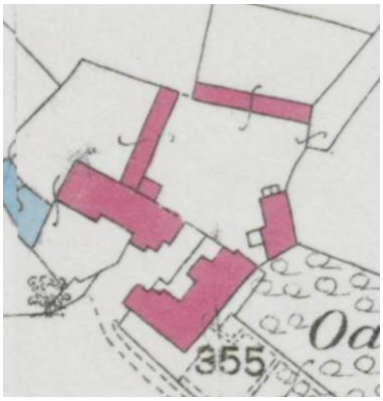
Assessment: This is my third consultation response and follows the submission of amended plans.

The listed building comprises a 9 bay stone former threshing barn with northeast facing porch and a later open sided lean-to keyed into the southwest elevation, likely dating to the 19th century. The barn is currently in use as a general store, divided by modern concrete block and timber partitions. The former hay loft has been removed leaving the internal space open to the rafters, exposing the collar and tie beam roof. Pigeon holes are preserved on the southeast gable and an owl hole on northwest gable. The dimensions of the barn and different style gables suggest that the structure has been extended to the northwest, most likely in the mid 19th century.

The proposed plans seek the conversion of the barn to form a five-bed detached dwelling on two levels, with open plan kitchen and dining area (open to the roof), living room and two ensuite bedrooms on the Ground Floor. Three further bedrooms would be situated at first floor level.

In heritage terms there is no objection in principle to the sensitive conversion and re-use of the existing barn. However, there are still significant concerns regarding the layout and lack of information/details.

Layout – As seen from the 1st Edition OS map below, the partly existing modern concrete block structures to the north east elevation are not original and detract from the character of the existing barn. The barn would be enhanced through their removal and the original appearance of the barn reinstated. This would also provide a focus on the original main cart entrance as the primary feature on the front elevation.



As such in conservation terms the preference would be to remove these modern structures rather than replace them. I am also concerned that the replacement of the north eastern extension would necessitate the knocking through of a doors way in the cart entrance when there does not appear to be a precedent for this opening (unless the applicant can provide evidence of a historic door opening) - this would cause loss of plan form and historic fabric.

Elevations – overall this amended scheme has been improved through the partial removal of suburban fussy details and this is welcomed and would better relate to the agricultural character of this listed threshing barn.

North East – this has been slightly amended by the proposed vertical timber boarding. I still remain concerned at the creation of a doorway from the main barn as set out above.

South East – acceptable. Details of how the nesting boxes will be treated is however required.

South West – acceptable.

North West – acceptable. Details of how the arrow slit will be treated is however required.

Constructional details: Far more consideration needs to be given before any proposal can be properly assessed. Details need to be explicit in the application, exactly what proposed changes are proposed, in order that a detailed assessment can be made as to the likely impact on the significance of the designated heritage asset:

- A detailed schedule of works is required.
- No treatment of the internal walls and roof is specified. Details need to be provided as for the treatment of the walls and roof. The exposed internal stone walls are part of the significance of the building, these need to be largely left exposed. Treatment of the roof also needs to be specified, in particular insulation and any boarding.
- Concrete floor – the existing concrete ideally needs to be removed in favour of a breathable insulated limecrete floor. Trial holes would be necessary to establish to depth of existing footings.
- A roof structure plan is needed to show areas of timber replacement or reinforcing (and how this is proposed)
- Replacement of existing saddlestone is not justified
- Loss of existing cobbled flooring is not justified
- Areas of re-pointing of cracks and loose masonry needs to be marked up/shown and justified in terms of fragile structure, mortar mix, and ecology.
- Specify which timber lintel needs to be replaced

- Mark up repairs to north porch

Summary & conclusion: 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.

As such further details and amendments are necessary before this proposal can be fully assessed.