CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2024/00160
Application Type:	Listed building consent (Alt/Ext)
Consultation ends:	06 May 2024
Case officer:	Fiona Webb
Site Address:	Shepherds Cottage, 4 Stradbrook Bratton, Westbury, BA13 4SE
Proposal:	To repair deflected oak joists in floor of first storey east bedroom along northern party wall.
Recommendation:	Approve with Conditions

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 or enhancing 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.

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."

Site and assets considered: The property is a Grade II listed building located in Bratton Conservation Area.

Proposal: The proposal seeks to repair deflected oak joists in the floor of the first storey east bedroom along the northern party wall

Relevant planning history:

Issues: impact on the listed building, impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings, impact on the conservation area.

Information considered/provided: Paragraph 200 requires that applicants describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. This should include sufficient information to provide a clear understanding of the significance of the heritage asset and its setting and the potential impact of any proposals on that significance. In this case, the application is accompanied by a "Structural engineers Report" which provides sufficient information to understand the impact of the proposal and is proportionate to the scope. The requirements of the NPPF are therefore met in this respect.

However, paragraph 201 also provides for the local planning authority to make its own assessment of impact and the following heritage recommendations are offered on this basis.

Significance of assets and contribution of setting: 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 **archaeological**, **architectural**, **artistic** or **historic**. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting." Historic England assesses significance in a similar manner, referring to evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values of a place.

In this case the significance of the building lies largely with its historic fabric and architecture - its form, layout and architectural expression/detailing and use of high-quality design materials which have significant aesthetic and architectural interest and which contribute to the character of the conservation area.

Assessment: The Grade II Listed semi-detached two-storey property dates back to C17, with various alterations having been undertaken to it since this time, particularly in C18 and C19. The house includes a roof space, two bedrooms on the first floor, and kitchen, living room and bathroom on the ground floor, with a sub-floor basement accessed by a hatch within the bathroom floor on the eastern side of the building. The house includes a slate roof covering on felt, battens and a timber cut roof structure, which has been largely reconstructed after a fire in the 1990s.

The first floor structure primarily includes historic elm planks supported on oak floor joists, with the ground floor similarly constructed. The party wall with the adjoining building to the north includes an historic oak frame, probably C17, with clay brick and lime mortar infill. The remaining external walls to the house are generally built of solid brickwork.

The floor in the bedroom above the ground floor bathroom includes oak joists, nominal 50x90 @ 350 centre to centre spacing spanning west – east approximately 2.5m. The floor structure is therefore quite weak. Two of the joists, local to the northern party wall, have significantly deflected, with evidence of the eastern joist bearings having settled historically.

The eastern bearings to the joists appear to be quite reasonable, with good embedment. Similarly, the quality of the oak is adequate, although the second joist out from the eastern party wall is showing very slight signs of a minor span fracture.

The proposed repairs would involve removing the existing resinous filling between the elm planks, and releasing or cutting the existing nails securing the boards, to facilitate the northern end of the boards to be left in place but raised. This would only apply over the area of the bathroom below.

The proposal would then be to strengthen the oak joists by adding scribed oak furring timbers, glued and clamped to the top of the existing joists. This would then provide a more robust and level support for the elm boarding, allowing them to be refixed and patched where required. This would include an edge cover plank adjacent to the party wall, where there is currently a gap. It is proposed to carry out any patching in elm, and if elm cannot be sourced, oak will be used.

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.

The impact of the proposals on heritage assets will be neutral and the requirements of current conservation legislation, policy or guidance are considered to be met and there is therefore no objection to the approval of the application.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

Bratton Parish Council – No objection

REPRESENTATIONS:

None

RECOMMENDATION:

Consent

REASON FOR GRANTING ~~PERMISSION/~~CONSENT/~~REFUSAL~~:

The works as carried out preserve the special historic interest of the heritage assets in accordance with Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990 and NPPF section 16, because these works are considered an appropriate form and detailing.

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 works hereby granted consent shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents: Location Plan – dated 8/01/2024 Ground and First Floor Plans - dated 5/03/2024 Bedroom Foor Repairs, Photos and Details – dated 8/01/2024 Surveyors Report – dated 22/01/2024 REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of the significance of the heritage asset.