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HERITAGE, ACCESS & DESIGN STATEMENT

Project:

Proposed Extension and Alterations to

The Old Library, Church Hill, Donhead St Mary, SP7 9DQ

for

Mrs K Frost

November 2025



1. Site and Surroundings

- 1.1. The property is situated in an elevated position to the northwest periphery of Donhead St Mary along Church Hill, which principally consists of residential plots developed in a loose manner akin to villages within the locality. The village is within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape and the position of The Old Library places it within the Donhead St Mary Conservation Area, which also contains a handful of listed buildings within the immediate locality (Fig .2). Listed Buildings include – Shute House GII and Garden GII* (1), Church Cottage GII (2), Church of St Mary GI (3).

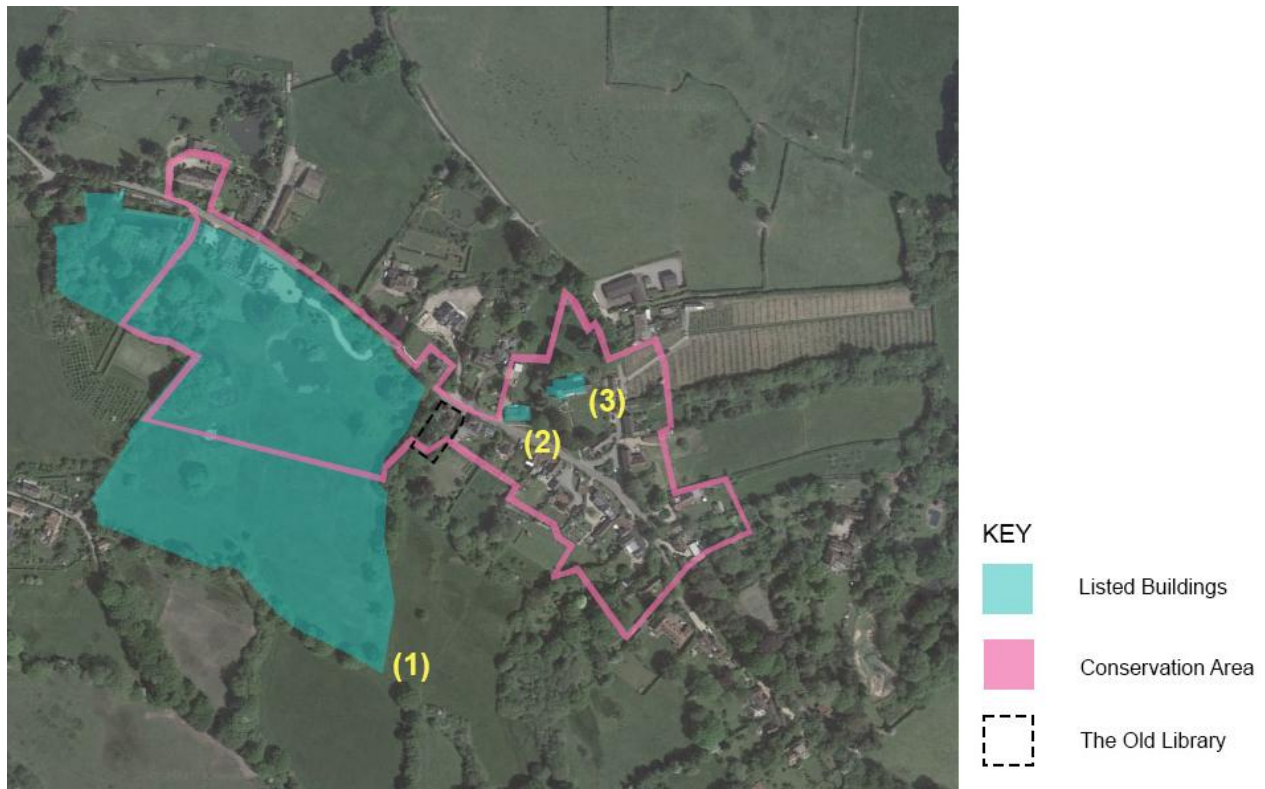


Fig.2 – Aerial view illustrates the position of The Old Library relative to listed buildings and the Donhead St Mary Conservation Area.

- 1.2. The Old Library is a detached dwelling which is slightly set back from the lane Church Hill. The dwelling is positioned within a modest plot which extends southwards and has reaching views towards Win Green as the topography slopes away down the plot. It is bound by Church Hill to the northeast, the grounds of Shute House to the west, and detached dwelling 'Dunworth House' to the east and associated garden that wraps around the south.
- 1.3. The dwelling is constructed from a combination of local natural green sandstone and reconstituted stone. A range of roof materials have been used throughout the property, which include thatch, plain concrete tiles and felt flat roofs.



Fig.3 Approach view from north.



.Fig.4 Street view into site

- 1.4. The original element of The Old Library dates from the mid-1800s, which sits alongside the lane and is defined by the green sandstone walls and thatched roof. Subsequent extension to the south has been made to increase the property's accommodation provisions (S/1985/0779). A detached garage and store have also been added to the plot (S/1987/0178).

2. Assessment of Heritage Assets

- 2.1. The site lies with the village Conservation Area (fig.2). It lies adjacent to the garden to Shute House which is listed as a Grade II* Park and Garden whilst the house is separately listed Grade II and lies on the far side of the garden to The Old Library. Two other buildings that lie nearby are Church Cottage, GV II and St Mary's Church GV I.
- 2.2. The Old Library itself could classify as a non-designated heritage asset although it has been subject to a degree of alteration and change. However, its unrelieved greensand stone front elevation under a thatched roof facing on to the road is perhaps its principal feature of interest.
- 2.3. The immediate setting is rather a loose collection of dwellings arranged along the road with no particular 'grain'. In the vicinity modern development is mixed in with old and are all traditional build with two stories under pitched roofs. Predominantly of greensand stone, but with some brick and timber boarding. Along the southeast side of the road, dwellings are largely arranged close to the roadside whilst on the northeast they are set well back and screened from view. There is no particularly strong architectural style and is typical village mix of ages and styles.
- 2.4. The Old Library lies close to the highway and effectively screens the modern extension to the rear when approached from the northwest approach (fig.3). From the northeast the modern extension can be viewed but largely consists of a recessive roof scape (fig.4), with a thick tree screen along the southwest boundary there is very limited visibility between Shute House Garden and the application site (fig.5).
- 2.5. The Old Library fits with the general character of the area, and other than the small section of bitumen flat roof and bin store, blends with the street scene.
- 2.6. The proposal is for a very minor addition to the rear of the Old Library which is hidden from view.
- 2.7. Due to the level of screening and the discrete siting of the proposal there will be no observable impact on heritage assets.



Fig.5 View of tree screen from the rear.

3. Proposal

- 3.1. The existing split-level arrangement of the dwelling and associated plan form necessitates regular ascents of the staircases to navigate the interior throughout the day, which restricts the functionality of the property for its occupants.
- 3.2. Therefore, the applicant would like to make internal alterations and extend over the existing external balcony to make necessary improvements to the dwelling's access and circulation provisions, and ensure the dwelling remains functional for the applicant, who has resided at The Old Library for a number of decades. The proposed alterations are therefore the next natural phase of adapting the dwelling to suit the requirements of the applicant and its continued use into the future.

4. Design

- 4.1. The proposal seeks to infill over the existing northwest facing balcony with a modest building mass to provide valuable additional floor area required to reorganise the property's existing circulation.
- 4.2. The form of the proposed extension aims to rationalise the existing varying roof forms contained within this elevation by inserting a symmetrical extrusion with clean sharp edges that harmonise the aesthetics of the elevation, whilst also establishing a built element which is clearly defined in the property's chronology.

- 4.3. Reorganisation of the entrance and associated accommodation is also proposed as part of the circulation improvements, which will also enhance the dwelling's sanitary provisions.
- 4.4. Infilling over the balcony repurposes a current underutilised area, which also provides a key location at the property to achieve clear vertical circulation for a home lift without impacting the existing habitable rooms throughout.
- 4.5. Larch vertical timber boarding is proposed to clad the infill extension to provide a natural and sustainable material, which will weather down naturally to a silver/grey to compliment the dwellings existing subtle material palette. Plain tiles to the extension roof will match the existing adjacent roof.
- 4.6. New windows and doors are powder coated aluminium, to provide a high quality and low maintenance material approach.

5. Town Planning

5.1 Planning History

Two previous applications have been for tree works which were granted.

S/1985/0779 Extension and alterations

S/1987/0178 Erection of garage over store room

S/2006/2405 Roof mounted solar collector (south elevation)

5.2 Planning Considerations

Is the proposal appropriate in scale and design to the host dwelling

Will there be any impacts on the amenity or character of the area and landscape more generally.

Will the proposal detract from the amenities of neighbours.

Scale and Design

5.3 As stated above the size of the proposal is minor, adding only a small volume and requires planning permission due to the previous extension. The design approach is distinctively contemporary where the host building is of little architectural merit, and it clearly differentiated and separated from the Old Library element of the dwelling. The extension will therefore be clearly differentiated and add to the history of the building in its third or fourth phase of development.

5.4 The design retains a traditional envelope with the window following the roof profile. Being distinctly contemporary in inspiration with its contrast to the host is a deliberate design feature where the owner can appreciate it without any impact on the public realm or heritage assets.

5.5 There are some changes to fenestration on the southeast elevation that are not sufficient to trigger the need for express planning permission in an off themselves but are shown on the submitted proposals.

Amenity of Area

5.6 Similarly due to the location and size of the extension there is no impact on neighbours.

Impact on Landscape

5.7 For the same reason there is no impact on landscape. Notwithstanding the minor nature of the proposal the site is heavily screened from all directions with no views available outside of the site.

6. Ecology

6.1. The building was assessed as having low potential to support roosting bats and after survey no evidence of bats was found. Therefore, a precautionary approach is sufficient as set out in the ecological impact assessment.

7. Arboricultural

7.1. The proposal is constructed off existing walls and is essential a small infill at first floor level and therefore the proposal does not affect existing trees. Whilst there are two existing trees within falling distance of the proposed extension, and marked on the site plan, there are other parts of the house and the garage far closer to the trees than the proposal.

8. Summary

8.1. The proposals are very minor in nature and look to add a contemporary additional to a 1980's extension. This, along with the other changes proposed to the building, will assist in the applicant remaining in the house as a lifetime home.

8.2. No harm arises to heritage assets, landscape, flora or fauna.

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