

Att: Natalie Rivans, Pippa Card and Wiltshire Council Listed Planning Committee Members.

Dear Natalie, Pippa and Listed Planning Committee Members,

Supporting letter for Shaw House Listed Planning Applications.

Having been engaged in restoration and renovation works at Shaw House for the past two and a half years, in support of our listed planning applications, detailed below is a brief background of the methodology, materials and finishes we have applied to this project.

After long careers working across Africa, Asia and America, we decided to return to the UK to be closer to our London based adult children and to pursue our lifelong dream of owning and restoring an historic English country home at our leisure. We rented a small home in 2020 and spent two years looking at country properties with easy access to motorways and close to large villages and shops. We eventually settled on the West Country and Wiltshire and following two visits during the summer of 2022 and reviewing a detailed surveyors report which concluded that the property was structurally sound but needed limited infrastructural repairs, we decided to purchase the property.

While we waited for completion and occupation, we appointed a reputable main contractor and started planning the infrastructure work needed to repair missing roof tiles, rusted gutters, and upgrade the aspects of the homes electrics, plumbing and heating which were dangerous or non compliant. We also started planning and budgeting for the restoration and redecorating of the Victorian wing and the upgrade of its bathrooms and the more complex work needed to restore and decorate of the Georgian wing, upgrade its bathrooms and install a new heating system and period appropriate kitchen which had moved from the original Georgian era basement kitchen to the first floor during the Victorian era.

When we viewed the property in the summer of 2022, much of the interior of the property had been painted black (including many floors,ceilings and interior shutters) and many shutters were permanently

closed with doors and windows being covered with interesting screens and curtains. Despite this unusual look, the home's architecture, tasteful furnishings and beautiful garden ensured that we were smitten.

Unfortunately as a result of all the black surfaces, furnishing and a loft that was literally packed to the rafters when we viewed it, much of the structural decay and water ingress we subsequently found was not readily evident to either us nor the surveyor during our summer visits.

Shortly after occupation this all became apparent and our well conceived plans had to be set aside following the first major rain storm. Water came pouring down the attic stairs into the kitchen and boot room, water ran down the inside walls of the Dutch gable/ large bedroom in the Victorian wing and down the kitchen and breakfast room walls, into the basement, which flooded badly, and so waterproofing the property and urgently repairing the roof and gutters became our very costly first priority.

During the roof repairs, significant structural damage caused by decades of neglect and water ingress to stonework, wooden beams and flooring became evident, with the electrical and gas installations being outdated and dangerous, the plumbing and heating systems requiring major work and most sash windows, shutters and flooring needing servicing, major repairs or replacement.

We extensively researched what the original home would have looked like in 1711 and more recent Victorian times, sourced the materials, finishes, ironmongery, light fittings, stone and timber that would have been originally used and where possible tried to ensure that we restore the properties historic character and remove the dearth of plasterboard partitioning, dozens of downlighters, modern features and materials which were installed during the extensive works done to the property in the 1970's and early 1980's when the property was used as an old age home.

We have made contact with several former owners, including the family that owned the property for almost 100 years and planted the distinctive

Lime trees lining the driveway in 1920, and sourced as many old photos of the home as possible to assist with our restoration efforts.

Much of the work we have undertaken has repaired and materially improved the building's core infrastructure and so our dream of sympathetically tackling the aesthetics and restoring it's original character as our retirement project, only became possible once this extensive infrastructure work had been completed in 2024.

The specialist heritage surveyor from our insurer, Ecclesiastical, recently undertook a very detailed survey of the property and informed us that this is the best listed building restoration he has seen in a decade and that we should feel very proud of what we've done for the property. Unfortunately from a financial perspective he believes we have significantly over spent and overcapitalised on the property, making it unlikely that we'll ever fully recoup our investment. Whilst this is probably true and has been a disaster for us financially into our retirement, we took on this challenge with the very best of intent, out of our appreciation for English Heritage and Georgian Architecture and have tried our very best to sympathetically restore Shaw House so that it's character is retained and its history and features are able to be enjoyed for hundreds of years to come.

Shaw House has been through many changes of use and structure during its history, from a working farm and grand country home, to a boarding school, a WWII military hospital, a long period of council ownership and use as an old age home, use as a private retirement home and many other uses, before being subdivided into three residential homes and its current semi detached state. It has suffered long periods of neglect and poor maintenance, but we do feel proud that we have been able to arrest its substantial decay, given this beautiful old building another few hundred years of history and in the process restore many of its original features, character and grandeur.

We appreciate that our contractors and trades advised us badly on what Council and Listed Planning permissions and approvals were required, but as the current custodians of the property, we have always been

committed to doing what is best for the property and for this reason we have always been cooperative, open and transparent, and provided full and unfettered access to Shaw House for any inspections required. We have drawn on the expertise of a heritage specialist and experienced architect to help us better understand the history and structure of the property and to prepare our listed planning applications. We hope that their advice and assistance will make it easier for you to objectively review our applications.

Since both inspection visits to Shaw House were at a point where the property was clad in scaffolding and was a messy building site, now that works are complete, we would like to formally extend an invitation to you and any interested parties from the Council to visit Shaw House again, to inspect the finished property and review all the structural and aesthetic improvements that we have undertaken to restore and enhance the character of the property.

Yours sincerely,

Craig & Sue Bond