

Design, Heritage Impact & Access Statement

Hill Cottage
7 Reybridge
Chippenham
SN15 2PB



existing photograph from the public highway

December 2025

Introduction



Hill Cottage is a grade II listed detached dwelling at the northern extremity of the Lacock Conservation Area. It also sits within the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation. The property is built of natural stone, brick and timber with a real mix of styles, ages and conservation values. The image above is from the rear garden, which is in a dilapidated state and features an array of outbuildings, crumbling retaining walls and areas of decking/paving. The site is accessed via a steep private driveway to the front of the property, which the applicant owns but which is suffering from subsidence and is placing the building at significant risk. The cottage currently has off-street parking for 4 vehicles.

A number of refused applications were submitted by the previous owners looking to extend to the side of the house, **15/06505/FUL**, **14/07429/FUL** and their associated LBC's both were refused because it was felt that the wrap-around form totally engulfed the historic cottage and was too ornate to be sympathetic to the asset.

Heritage Asset Introduction

LACOCK REYBRIDGE ST 96 NW 3/148 No 7 (Hill Cottage) GV II

House, C17 and C18, a C17 timber-frame and red brick range on rubble stone high base with Bridgwater tile roof and south end stack with C18 rubble stone south end addition with stone slate roof and south end stack. 1 1/2 and 2 storeys. Original range has square framing and angle bracing, 2-window range of triple casement windows, upper windows in gabled dormers. Two storey C18 range, one-room plan, has door in chamfered surround and 2-light cyma- moulded flush mullion window above. Two similar windows to south end wall. Interior: original range has oak plank door in south end wall and fireplace screened from door by C18 settle.

The house has been victim of many years DIY repairs and garden changes, its setting is heavily impacted by the excess of residential paraphernalia in the garden spaces but also almost all retaining walls are structurally unsound, the house has been poorly underpinned at its northeast corner and the driveway has no retaining design and is sliding into the road exposing the base of the house's walls. The house has been poorly maintained during this period, such that it is now in need of urgent structural repairs and improvements to its thermal fabric to minimise damage to the historic fabric and to optimise its usage to ensure long-term preservation.

A pre-application ENQ/2025/01015 was submitted with 3 options to achieve the improvements, and guidance was given by Mr Alex Marsh, who steered us toward the now submitted proposal.

Proposed Works

1. Replacement of the rear kitchen extension with a better kitchen and garden space linked to the asset with a smaller link building to expose more of the original fabric.
2. Addition of a single conservation 'in roof' rooflight to allow light to the first-floor hallway
3. A first-floor bathroom.
4. Minor alterations to the driveway and new retaining structures to remove subsidence risk and improve access.
5. New configuration of the garden retaining forms to simplify the cluttered environment and improve the setting of the asset.
6. Improvements to the fabric of the existing building to insulate it while protecting the historic timberwork.
7. A small garden office outbuilding would replace the array of existing modern outbuildings and crumbling structures. The historic WC outhouse will be retained and renovated.

Design

The proposal is to create an articulated façade using a standard brick module to produce a vernacular yet unique addition to the house. The regular brick piers align with the appearance of the half-timbered C17 original portion of the house. While windows are very minimal aluminium timber composite units, read as holes in the façade rather than being ornate.

Internally, we will seek to reinstate historic features such as the fireplace on the first floor and removal of modern cementitious render or Gypsum plasters on the historic fabric in the existing kitchen link, allowing the historic walls to breathe again.

Externally, the historic timber will be re-exposed where possible, and the brick and stonework repointed with lime pointing.

Garden retaining walls will be faced in semi-course rubble stonework to appear as drystone walls.

Massing

The existing house is circa 500m³

The new addition is 100 m³, which is a 20% increase in the volume of the building.

The form is almost entirely hidden from public view, not only behind the house, which is itself substantially elevated from the public realm, but also hidden behind a roadside hedge.

The outbuilding is placed to the rear of the site and gives the owners a space to work from home. It is smaller volumetrically than the removed structures.

Privacy & Impact

The topography and age of this part of Reybridge means the site is completely hidden from public view. Alterations to the driveway are proposed to be stone-faced to appear as historic retaining structures. It has no potential for overlooking and is buried into the hillside to ensure its subservience and ease of access.

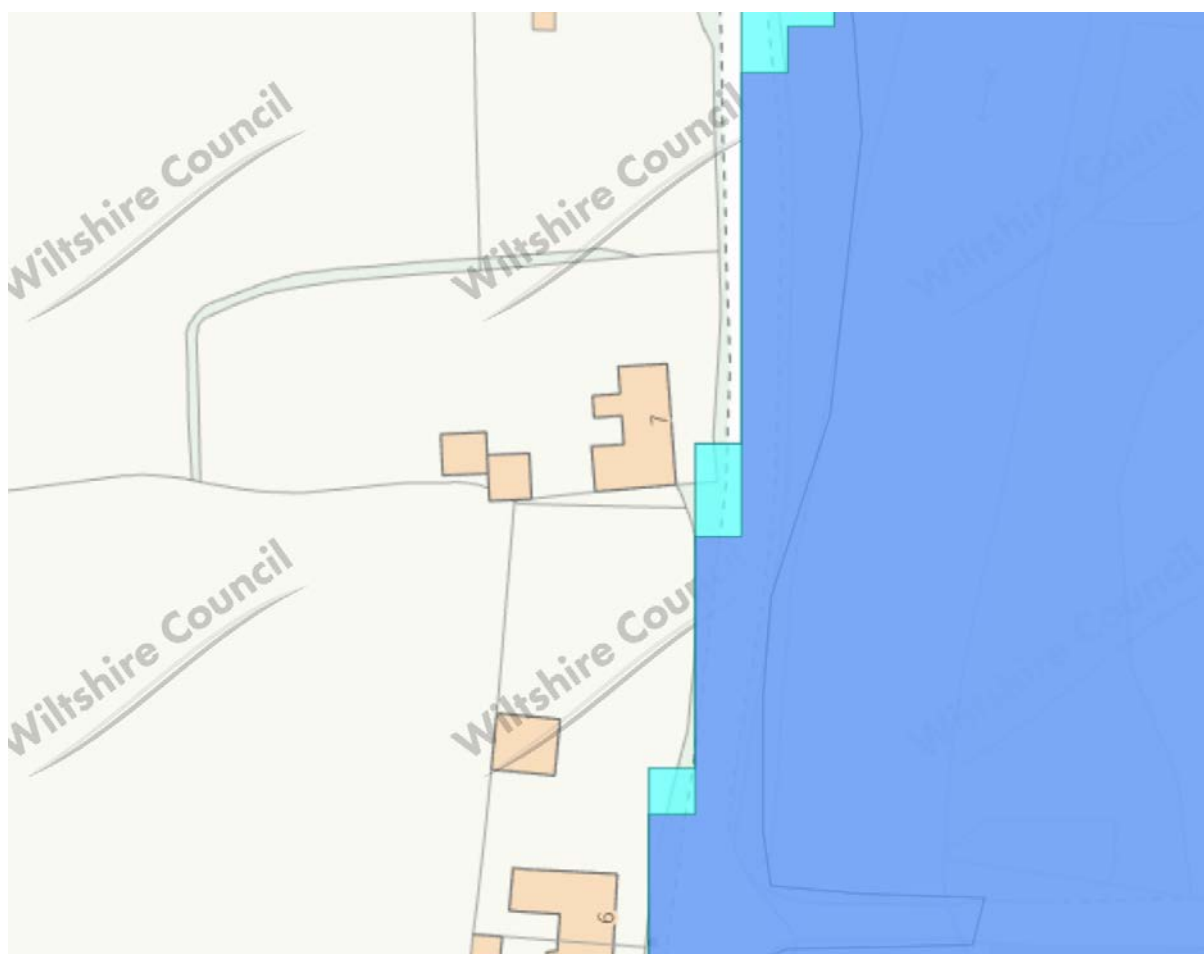
Following guidance from the conservation department we reduced the quantum of development and carefully balanced the additional volume against a reduced connection/link to the asset to ensure a minimal impact on the asset while gaining the optimum usage of the asset and hence creating a sustainable future for it.

Appearance & Materiality

The extension is designed using a brick module and regular piers to celebrate the historic component of the house, while hidden gutters and considered detailing will make it immediately apparent as contemporary and different to the previous additions, adding another layer of history to the beautiful narrative history of the asset. The outbuilding will be entirely timber-clad in larch but mimicking the rhythm and form of the extension.

Flooding

The site is immediately adjacent to the River Avon but is sited well above the flood plain, as the plans below show.



Access & Parking

The driveway is presently highly dangerous not only to the asset itself, as it falls away from the house, but also to the public realm. This proposal looks to improve the setting of the asset and secure its long-term structural integrity. There is no proposed reduction in parking spaces.

Ecology

Following guidance from the council's ecology team, a full PRA was undertaken, and no evidence of protected species was found. The reports are included in the application.

Conclusion/Impact on Asset

This building is of reasonably high heritage value, mostly because of the interesting evolution of the house over hundreds of years. This proposal continues that evolution with a highly detailed and bespoke addition that is an example of the best in design of our own time. It improves the host assets setting by tidying the garden and driveway, reduces the risk of subsidence and achieves its optimum usage as a family home, thus ensuring the long-term preservation of the asset.